VISIT…

LANZAROTE

Caliente.COM

Rainer Werner Fassbinder was simultaneously a maker of films and a man who 'played with people': the forty-three films he directed before his early death at the age of thirty-seven in 1982 were products of a convoluted game of emotions between him and a close-knit group of versatile actors. He wielded astonishing power over his artists, but though he was an oppressor, he made passionate cinematic statements about liberty in such productions as *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Despair* and *Veronika Voss*.

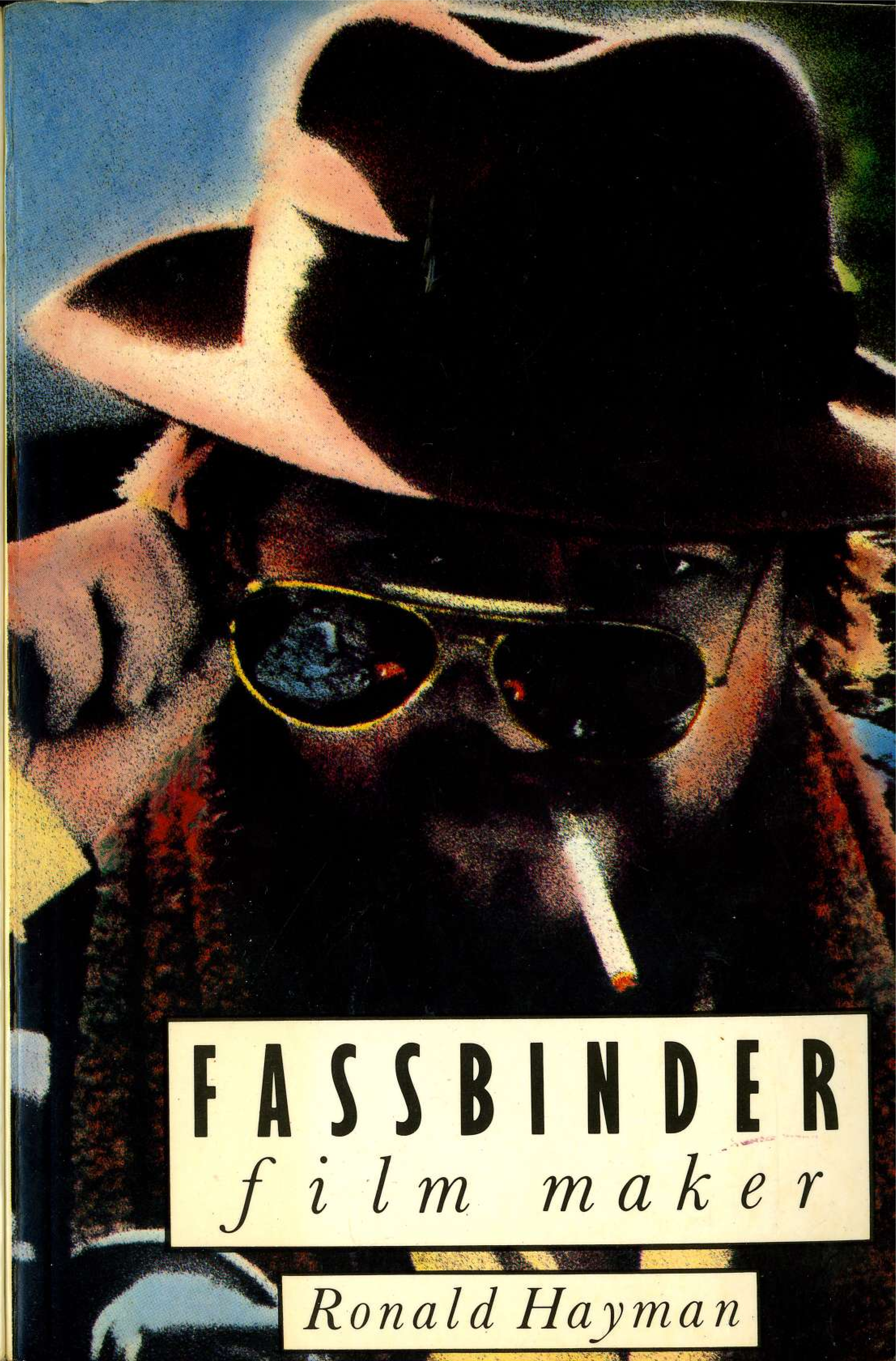
The films could not have been what they were if Fassbinder had not been what he was – the product of a lonely childhood, moody, impatient, jealous, vengeful, a drug addict, generous, brutal, and most vicious of all towards himself.

Aided by film stills and photographs from the private collections of those who knew him most intimately, Ronald Hayman presents a fascinating insight into the relationship between this obsessional, explosive personality and the unique films he created.

Ronald Hayman was educated at St Paul's and Cambridge, and worked in the theatre as an actor and director before becoming well known as a critic and writer. Among the many books he has written are biographies of Nietzsche, Kafka and Brecht. He has written for *Encounter* and *The Observer*, and is a regular broadcaster for the BBC.

Weidenfeld & Nicolson ISBN 0 297 78448 X

price
in UK only
£5.95 net



FASSBINDER
film maker

Ronald Hayman

Lilo Pempeit (Liselotte Eder, Fassbinder's mother) as Frau Pums and Fassbinder, working on *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1979–80). The cameraman Xaver Schwarzenberger is in the centre of the group behind them.

FASSBINDER
film maker

Ronald Hayman

Weidenfeld and Nicolson
London

For Sharon

PICTURE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the following sources for supplying and authorising reproduction of the illustrations. If any copyright owner has unwittingly been overlooked the publishers will be glad to rectify this in future editions.

Patrick LaBanca (Munich): pp. ii, xii (below), 60, 79, 80 (above), 81, 121, 123, 124, 125, 143, 165
Bavaria Atelier Gesellschaft (Munich): p. 139
Lilian Birnbaum: p. 77 (below)
Cinegate Film Distribution: pp. 43, 47 (right), 59
Contemporary Films Ltd: pp. 77, 100, 117, 118
Film Verlag der Autoren GmbH (Munich): pp. 75, 112
Ulrich Handl: pp. 37 (above), 39, 137 (below)
Franz Hug (Munich): pp. 115 (below), 134, 140, 149
Renate Leiffer: pp. xii (above), 15, 20, 28, 29 (right), 37 (below), 50, 58 (below), 67, 84 (below), 137 (above), 152
Christopher Makos (New York): p. 132 (below)
Michael McLernon and Dieter Schidor: pp. 104, 130, 132 (above)
Munic Films GmbH (Munich): pp. 36, 58 (above), 63, 65, 89, 142
Erika Rabau (Berlin): pp. viii, 84 (above)
Tango Films (Munich): pp. 8, 9, 18, 19, 23, 63, 66, 70, 71, 80 (below), 86, 87, 101, 103
Tobis Film GmbH (Berlin): p. 115 (above)
Weltvertrieb Beta-Film (Munich): p. 57
Westdeutscher Rundfunk (Cologne): pp. 5, 6, 95, 109, 146
Andy Warhol: pp. 128, 159

Copyright © Ronald Hayman 1984

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise, without the prior permission of
the copyright owner.

ISBN 297 78447 1 (cased)
ISBN 297 78448 x (paperback)

Designed by Kevin Shenton for
George Weidenfeld and Nicolson
91 Clapham High Street
London SW4

Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd,
Frome and London

Contents

Picture Acknowledgments iv
Acknowledgments vi
Chronological Table vii

1 No Childhood at All 1
2 The Group and the Team 27
3 Paying for Love 56
4 The Necessary Cruelty 85
5 Themes and Variations 99
6 Franz Biberkopf and Querelle 120
7 The Statement and the Self 135

Notes 148
Filmography 151
Fassbinder in the Theatre 160
Select Bibliography 162
Index 164

Acknowledgments

The first words of thanks must go to Anthony Vivis and Piers Plowright. Anthony Vivis translated Fassbinder's *Bremen Coffee*, which I directed at the Traverse Theatre Edinburgh and at the Hampstead Theatre Club. He was working for the BBC when I suggested a Radio 3 feature on Fassbinder and he passed the idea on to Piers Plowright, who had produced my programmes on Nietzsche, Kafka and the Marquis de Sade.

In July 1983 Piers Plowright and I went to Munich, where we recorded interviews with Harry Baer, Rudolf Waldemar Brem, Liselotte Eder (Fassbinder's mother), Michael Fengler, Johanna Hofer, Eva Mattes, Kurt Raab, Peer Raben, Dieter Schidor, Thomas Schühly, Ursula Strätz, Laurens Straub, Barbara Sukowa, Margaretha von Trotta and Rosel Zech. Back in London I recorded an interview with Tony Rayns, who had edited the first book in English on Fassbinder, and, returning to Munich in December, I talked to Frau Eder, Renate Leiffer, Juliane Lorenz, Peer Raben and Dieter Schidor. Then, in February 1984, I had a conversation in London with Mrs Maria Saekel-Jelkmann. But for the kindness of these co-operative people, neither the radio programme nor the book would have been possible.

I should like to thank Helga Rulf and the librarians of the Goethe Institut in London and Elizabeth Vetter of the Goethe Institut in Munich, who let me see videotapes of many Fassbinder films I had missed.

I must acknowledge my indebtedness to the books listed in the bibliography, especially to the book by Kurt Raab, the most detailed of the memoirs to have appeared in German, and to the Fassbinder book in the Film Reihe 2 series, which contains valuable criticism and an excellent filmography.

I am indebted to my editor at Weidenfeld, Anne Dobell, and to Faith Glasgow, who helped to track down the illustrations. My thanks, finally, to Christine Kastner who typed the manuscript and sacrificed a bank holiday to help me meet the deadline. Translations from the German are my own.

Chronological Table

1945		born 31 May in Bad Wörishofen, the son of Dr Hellmuth Fassbinder and his wife Liselotte
1951		divorce of his parents
1964		schooling ends
1965		beginning of affairs with Christoph Roser and Irm Hermann; shoots his first film, *The City Tramp* (for German titles of films see Filmography)
1966		part-time attendance at the Fridl-Leonhard Studio (drama school) in Munich, where he meets Hanna Schygulla; shoots his second film, *The Little Chaos*
1967		joins Action Theater, taking over the role of Tiresias in *Antigone*
1968	May:	Action Theater closed; antiteater founded
1968		(autumn) to 1969 (autumn): antiteater based in the 'Witwe Bolte' in the Schwabing district of Munich
1969	Apr:	shoots *Love Is Colder than Death* in and around Munich (24 days)
	Jun:	the film is premièred at the Berlin Film Festival
	Aug:	shoots *Katzelmacher* in Munich (9 days)
	Oct:	the film is premièred at the Mannheim Filmwochen
	Oct—Nov:	shoots *Gods of the Plague* in Munich, Dingolfing (5 weeks)
	Dec:	shoots *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* in Munich (13 days); *Katzelmacher* wins the Evangelischer Filmpreis and the FIPRESCI Prize of the international film press
1970	Jan:	shoots *Rio das Mortes* in Munich (20 days)
	Feb:	shoots *The Coffee House* in Cologne (10 days)
	Apr:	*Gods of the Plague* premièred in Vienna at the Viennale

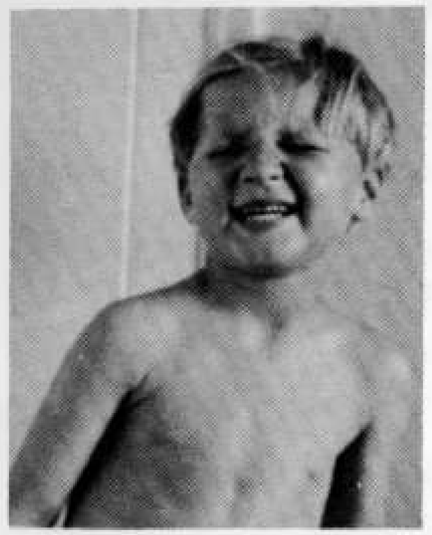
The young actor

	May:	shoots *The Niklashausen Journey* in Munich, Starnberg, Feldkirchen (20 days)
	Jun:	*Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* premièred at the Berlin Film Festival
	Aug:	shoots *The American Soldier* in Munich (15 days)
	Sep:	shoots *Beware of a Holy Whore* in Sorrento (22 days)
	Oct:	*The American Soldier* premièred at the Mannheim Filmwochen; *The Niklashausen Journey* shown on television
	Nov:	shoots *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* in Landsburg-Lech, Munich (25 days)
1971	Feb	*Rio das Mortes* shown on television
	May:	*Pioneers in Ingolstadt* shown on television
	Jul:	*Whity* premièred at the Berlin Film Festival
	Aug:	marriage with Ingrid Caven (they divorce during 1972); *Beware of a Holy Whore* premièred at the Venice Biennale; shoots *The Merchant of the Four Seasons* in Munich (11 days)
	Dec:	*Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* shown on television
1972	Jan:	shoots *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* in Munich (10 days)
	Mar:	*The Merchant of the Four Seasons* shown on television; shoots *Wild Game* in and around Straubing (14 days)
	Apr—Aug:	shoots the first five episodes of the television series *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* at a factory in Mönchen-Gladbach, Cologne (105 days)
	May:	*Beware of a Holy Whore* shown on television
	Jun:	*The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* premièred at the Berlin Film Festival
	Sep:	shoots *Bremen Coffee* in Saarbrücken (9 days)
	Sep—Oct:	first phase of shooting *Effi Briest*
	Oct:	first part of the series *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* televised
	Nov:	starts working at Bochum, where Peter Zadek is running the theatre
	Dec:	directs Ferenc Molnár's *Liliom* there; *Bremen Coffee* shown on television
1973	Jan:	*Wild Game* shown on television
	Jan—Mar:	shoots *World on a Wire* in Cologne, Munich, Paris (44 days)
	May:	shoots *Nora Helmer* in Saarbrücken (21 days)
	Jul—Sep:	shoots *Martha* in Konstanz, Ottobeuren, Kreuzlingen, Rome (25 days)

	Sep:	shoots *Fear Eats the Soul* (15 days)
	Oct:	*World on a Wire* shown on television
1974	Feb:	*Nora Helmer* shown on television
	Mar:	*Fear Eats the Soul* premièred in Munich
	Apr and Jul:	shoots *Fox* in Munich and Marrakesh (21 days)
	May:	*Martha* shown on television
	Jun:	*Effi Briest* premièred at the Berlin Film Festival
	Jul:	shoots *Like a Bird on the Wire* in Cologne (6 days); meets Armin Meier
	Aug:	takes up job as artistic director at the Theater am Turm, Frankfurt
1975	Feb—Mar:	shoots *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* in Frankfurt (20 days)
	Apr—May:	shoots *Fear of Fear* in Cologne, Bonn (25 days)
	May:	*Like a Bird on the Wire* shown on television; *Fox* premièred
	Jun:	official termination of engagement at the Theater am Turm
	Jul:	*Fear of Fear* shown on television
	Oct:	first stage of shooting *Satan's Brew* in Munich (14 days)
	Nov—Dec:	shoots *I Only Want You to Love Me* in and around Munich (25 days)
1976	Jan:	*Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* premièred in Berlin
	Jan—Feb:	second stage of shooting *Satan's Brew* in Munich (15 days)
	Mar:	*I Only Want You to Love Me* shown on television
	Apr—Jun:	shoots *Chinese Roulette* in and around the castle in Stöckach and at Munich airport (36 days)
	Oct:	*Satan's Brew* premièred at the Mannheim Filmwochen
	Oct—Dec:	shoots *Bolwieser* at the Marxgrün railway station near Bad Steben, the Förmitzsee, Schloss Thurnau, Bayreuth, Hof, Munich (40 days)
	Nov:	*Chinese Roulette* premièred at the Paris Festival
1977	Mar:	shoots *Women in New York* in the theatre at Hamburg (7 days)
	Apr—Jun:	shoots *Despair* in Munich, Interlaken, Berlin, Lübeck, Brunswick, Hamburg, Mölln (41 days)

	Jun:	*Women in New York* shown on television
	Jul:	*Bolwieser* shown on television
	Oct:	shoots episode in *Germany in Autumn* in his own Munich flat (6 days)
1978	Jan—Mar:	shoots *The Marriage of Maria Braun* in Coburg, Berlin (35 days)
	Mar:	Rough-cut of *Germany in Autumn* shown at Berlin Film Festival
	May:	*Despair* premièred at Cannes Festival
	Jun:	Death of Armin Meier
	Jul—Aug:	shoots *In a Year with 13 Moons* in Frankfurt (25 days)
	Nov:	*In a Year with 13 Moons* premièred in Frankfurt
	Dec—Jan 1979:	shoots *The Third Generation* in Berlin (30 days)
1979	Feb:	*The Marriage of Maria Braun* premièred at the Berlin Film Festival; wins the Silver Bear
	May:	*The Third Generation* premièred at the Cannes Festival
	Jun—Apr 1980:	shoots *Berlin Alexanderplatz* in Berlin and Munich (154 days)
	Oct:	Receives the Visconti Prize, awarded by Italian film critics
1980	Jul—Sep:	shoots *Lili Marleen* in Munich (47 days)
	Aug—Sep:	preview of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* at the Venice Biennale
	Oct—Dec:	television showing of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*
1981	Jan:	*Lili Marleen* premièred in Munich
	Apr—May:	shoots *Lola* in Munich (30 days)
	Aug:	*Lola* premièred
	Nov—Dec:	shoots *Veronika Voss* in Munich (24 days)
1982	Feb:	*Veronika Voss* premièred at the Berlin Film Festival. Wins Golden Bear
	Mar:	shoots *Querelle* in Berlin (22 days)
	Jun:	found dead in his Munich flat on 10 June

Prizes not mentioned in above listing:
German Film Prize (Bundesfilmpreis) 1970, 1971, 1972, 1978, 1979, 1982
Prize of the International Catholic Film Bureaux (OCIC) in Cannes 1974
Otto Dibelius Prize 1974



Fassbinder in 1949

Below: Lilo Pempeit (Liselotte Eder, Fassbinder's mother) as Frau Pums, the wife of the gang leader in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1979–80).

1 No Childhood at All

It would be naive to accept everything Rainer Werner Fassbinder told interviewers about his childhood, but we cannot simply dismiss all these vehemently bitter assertions: 'I grew up more or less without parents. I also lived entirely on my own very early – for example between the ages of seven and nine.'[1] 'As a child I was already what's called manic-depressive.'[2] 'It was a childhood that can't be seen as a childhood in the normal sense . . . It wasn't so much a messed-up childhood as no childhood at all.'[3] 'I can only remember that I couldn't differentiate between people. For instance there was a woman called Anita. I called her Madam Anita. And every day she wanted to know who I liked better, her or my mother – and really I liked them both equally.'[4] 'This curious sort of non-parental home.'[5] 'They divorced in 1951 when I was five . . . But earlier, too, before they divorced, there was no-one to tell me that this is done, that's not done . . . I really grew up like a little flower.'[6]

At other times he said he was six when his parents divorced, but he and his mother consistently falsified the date of his birth, which was given out as 1946 until after his death. The register of births in Bad Wörishofen shows that he was born on 31 May 1945, so he was just thirty-seven when he died in 1982.

He had countless grievances about his childhood. He has complained bitterly about the seventeen-year-old boy, Siggi, his mother took as a lover when he was eight or nine. Siggi tried unsuccessfully to behave like a father,[7] and Rainer had an even unhappier relationship with the much older man his mother married in 1958. The boy got on so badly at his first school that he was classified as 'ineducable' and expelled.[8] He was then sent to a Rudolf Steiner school, where he was relatively happy, but afterwards he was sent to boarding schools, and ran away from most of them.[9] It was only later in his life that he could feel he was getting to know his parents. Throughout most of his childhood, neither of them took much interest in him, except for brief periods when his mother took too much. She confided dreams she had about marrying him.[10] But to say he had no childhood at all is to kick equally hard at each phase of his early development. That he should need to do this is revealing, but the phases were extraordinarily dissimilar.

For about six years (1945–51) he lived with both his parents. His father, Hellmuth Fassbinder, was a doctor with a surgery at his flat in Sendlinger Strasse, a main thoroughfare of prostitution in the centre of Munich. Prostitutes came to him for the medical check-up they were required to have,[11] and the boy, who got used to seeing these women in the flat, liked them and formed the impression that they liked him. He was told he must have nothing to do with them, but he would go on feeling that there was nothing wrong or abnormal in prostitution. What confused him, though, was the number of people around him in the flat.[12] He was born three months after the unconditional surrender of Germany. In Munich so many buildings had been reduced to rubble by the Allied raids that many people no longer had homes, and in the Fassbinder flat sleeping space was given to relations, friends neighbours and the doctor's locum.[13] Fassbinder's mother Liselotte came from Danzig, which was occupied by the Russians, so her parents, brother and sister came to stay in the flat. 'All our relatives from the East needed help, and we were all living together in a sort of very large communal family, which normally might be very nice, but this life together proved to be terrible.'[14]

His grandfather, who had lost both legs, sat endlessly in the kitchen,[15] while the grandmother, a pious Catholic, did the cooking, but Fassbinder's memories of her were mostly hostile. He used to tell the story of a toy monkey she made for him after he had jealously destroyed the toy monkey belonging to a patient's child. For this he was punished, and to console him, his grandmother spent a good deal of time on making him a monkey out of material stuffed with stones. But during a row they had in the kitchen, he threw it at her and it broke.[16]

The doctor, who had two sons by a previous marriage, did not take much interest in the child, and neither did Liselotte, who helped her husband in the surgery. A friend of hers, who used to take Rainer out for walks from the age of about three, remembers that he had an insatiable appetite for stories, and wanted them to be made up specially for him. Often, when she finished improvising one, he would ask her to repeat it. If the second version deviated from the first, he would complain.[17]

The liveliness of his imagination is evident in the early paintings he did. He produced a great many of them, but his mother has no memory of his ever playing games in the flat.[18] It was at about the time of his parents' divorce that he began to develop a taste for Westerns. By the age of seven he was going to the cinema almost every day, seeing films of all kinds. If ever a child was educated by the movies, Rainer Werner Fassbinder was. Often he would go two or three times a day, in spite of half-hearted resistance from his mother, who would have preferred him to be playing football.[19] One Rudolf Steiner principle had lodged itself firmly in his mind: 'Children shouldn't be forced to do anything, but should always decide for themselves what they think is right.' At the school, as he described it, 'They are allowed to do whatever interests them and are not forced to do things that don't interest them. The idea is that children should grow up like little flowers.'[20] Unable to submit to the discipline of listening passively to a teacher, he could not settle down at any of his other schools. When he was about eleven, his maths teacher reported that Rainer was either mad or a genius: his marks were always either 1 or 6, the highest grade or the lowest.[21]

What his mother remembers is an extraordinarily generous little boy, always eager to spend his pocket money on buying presents for her and her mother;[22] what he remembered was a series of unsuccessful attempts to buy love from a cold, disapproving family, which tried to impose on him the empty forms and formulas of middle-class refinement. Jean-Paul Sartre, who also grew up without a father, claims that he therefore grew up without a Super-Ego;[23] Rainer was effectively making the same claim when he said: 'I'm my own father.'[24] Looking for patterns of male behaviour to copy, he found them in Hollywood movies and the sentimental German movies that were popular during the fifties. He preferred James Cagney to Humphrey Bogart, and he must have been impressed by the way that tough characters won love, friendship and popularity through robustly deviant behaviour. What remained with him in adult life was contempt for middle-class conventions of politeness and the need to be ring-leader in a tight circle of friends. But there was no quick realisation for his daydreams of achieving boss status. One early attempt at writing a play was part of an abortive effort to make the other boarders participate under his leadership in a tape-recorded reading. On one of his rare visits to the flat, the doctor had enlisted his son's collaboration in a recorded reading of Goethe's *Faust*, and as soon as his mother presented him with a tape-recorder, Rainer thought he at last had a way of making friends. Later, with other friends at home, he succeeded in making recordings of his scripts.[25]

The boy was left on his own for a great deal of the time, especially after Liselotte became ill with tuberculosis of the lung: she had to spend about a year in sanatoria. Rainer, who was about eight, might have suffered less if the large communal family had still been in existence, but his grandmother was dead, his father was unwilling to look after him, and so were his uncle and aunt, who had moved out of the flat.[26] His mother had sub-let rooms in it to other people, and the boy never went short of food, but with no-one to look after him properly or to take charge of him, he slowly became more independent and uncontrollable. He spent time in the streets, sometimes playing with other boys, sometimes just watching what went on.[27]

Hellmuth Fassbinder took advantage of his wife's absence to repossess most of the things that had belonged to them jointly,[28] and when, after the lobe of one lung had been removed, she finally came home, she did not have enough money to keep the flat going. Maria Saekel-Jelkmann, the friend who had taken Rainer for walks and told him stories, was a journalist, and she persuaded her boss, Wolf Eder, to give Liselotte a room in his flat.[29] Though she had studied only German Literature, she knew she would be able to earn money by translating, but she could not concentrate when the restless, noisy, headstrong boy was with her, and she could not always take time to cook for him. He was often sent out to the cinema or given money to buy himself a sausage from the stall on the corner.[30] Feeling rejected, he tried to withdraw from their relationship. When she sent him ten marks for the rail-fare home from the school, he spent the money on taking friends to the cinema. She felt rebuffed by the child and told herself that she must not be emotionally dependent on him. At home he struck her as aggressive and critical. Even his visual sense could become a weapon: 'That hat doesn't suit you.' 'You'd look better with your hair shorter.' At first they had been mutually dependent: he always wanted her to be in the room while he did his homework.[31] Both reacted strongly to the feeling of not being needed by the other, and Fassbinder was to spend much of his adult life struggling against memories of childhood.

I Only Want You to Love Me

Growing up as he did, Rainer could learn neither to love himself nor to believe that he was lovable. His insecurity centred on his appearance: other boys were loved more than he was, so other boys must be better-looking than he was. Knowing that he needed help, he couldn't stop himself from crying out, even if he cried silently, but he couldn't believe that help would be offered and couldn't bear to have it refused. The neurotic solution was to reject the offer before it was made. By behaving obnoxiously he could protect himself from the pain of being rebuffed for no apparent reason.

His need to spend pocket money on presents for his mother and grandmother is explained in his television film *I Only Want You to Love Me* (1975–6). His screenplay for it is loosely based on an interview with a murderer. He found this in a book by Klaus Antes and Christiane Erhardt, but, as in other films about family relationships, Fassbinder's treatment of the subject-matter is largely determined by painful memories of his own childhood. Desperate to please his parents, the boy, Peter, has stolen flowers from a neighbour's garden; his reward is a beating, ferociously administered by his mother with a coat-hanger. Still eager to give her presents, he spends hard-earned money on her, but the woman is always unresponsive. He has been trained as a builder, and he uses his free time to build his parents a new house, but this does not even win him gratitude, let alone love.

After he has married a shop-assistant, Erika, he is repeatedly shown handing over large bunches of flowers, not only to her but to her grandmother.

In *I Only Want You to Love Me* (1975) Erika (Elke Aberle) arrives at the new flat; Peter has bought flowers but no furniture.

The compulsion to buy love is incurable; he goes on spending money faster than he can hope to earn it, however much overtime he does. To please Erika, he furnishes the flat expensively by entering into onerous hire-purchase agreements. The audience becomes uncomfortably concerned as he squanders money on taxis and clothes for her, jewellery, a knitting machine.

Similarly, Fassbinder's desperate childhood generosity continued into adult life, and the experience of making the films did nothing to check it. He bought expensive presents for his mother, and spent enormous sums of money on his retinue, regularly taking large parties out to dinner, often treating friends and acquaintances to huge portions of caviar.[32] He bought extravagant presents for the men he loved: within twelve months the black actor Günther Kaufmann was given four Lamborghinis.[33] But whereas Peter squanders his money in his desperation to establish domestic security, Fassbinder never tried to settle into a permanent home of his own, never wanted to buy property and furniture. During the shooting of *Querelle* at the end of his life, greedy for money, he demanded cash payment of a daily salary – over £4000 – but instead of spending it or investing it or even banking it, he kept banknotes stacked in his room, knowing he could easily be robbed.[34]

As with Peter, the compulsive recklessness had its roots in emotional deprivation during childhood. The film makes its main point in showing why he has to go on taking the steps that will lead inevitably to catastrophe. Fassbinder, in living the way he latterly did – overeating, overworking, drinking heavily, taking drugs and sleeping pills in outrageous quantities – was making a similar point about the relationship in his own life between childhood deprivation and the need to take risks.

Many of his films feature self-absorbed parents who fail or refuse to reciprocate the attentiveness of their children, and he often shows sympathetic characters being corrected by seniors or social superiors for bad table manners or bad grammar. No doubt the young Rainer was often taken to task for ill-mannered behaviour, corrected if he spoke coarsely or ungrammatically in phrases picked up from dubbed Hollywood films or from playing in the streets. The attitude he developed towards education was almost entirely negative. Generally he tended to ally himself with proletarian or criminal characters against the middle classes; the leather jacket he so often wore was a symbol of this rebellion, and he went on identifying education with the

Opposite: Death of a father figure. Edith Volkmann (Landlord's wife), Vitus Zeplichal (Peter) and Janos Gönczöl (Landlord), left to right in *I Only Want You to Love Me* (1975–6).

unenlightened schools he had detested and with his family's frigid attempts to discipline him. In his films education is often bracketed with the attempt to impose good middle-class manners on a child or a working-class character who has grown up without them. He had an extraordinary sympathy with children, foreigners and the inarticulate, who were all liable to be exploited and oppressed. In his 1970 film *Rio das Mortes* Hanna (played by Hanna Schygulla) is studying educational science (as Hanna Schygulla had) and the text books she is given are manuals in 'adjustment', 'integration' and how to suppress children. In many of Fassbinder's films the most sympathetic characters are the least articulate, and the most memorable sequences are those which depend on his sympathetic understanding of feelings which cannot be articulated.

The Merchant of the Four Seasons

In the unforgettable final sequence of Fassbinder's 1971 movie *The Merchant of the Four Seasons* the amiable Hans Epp cannot explain why he wants to kill himself. The main responsibility for making him feel isolated falls on a repulsive family modelled closely on Fassbinder's family, while the story derives from events which actually occurred. His mother was amazed by the accuracy with which he recalled them. When his favourite uncle set himself up as a fruit and vegetable merchant, peddling his wares from a cart, the family gave him no emotional support. As a boy, Fassbinder had been unable to protect his uncle or even to protest, but the adult Fassbinder punishes the family by exposing its vindictiveness. Though Hans Epp is liable to beat up his wife if she grumbles when he stays in a bar drinking instead of coming home to eat the meal she has cooked, he is generally portrayed as the victim of women who bully or betray or seduce. In reality the uncle had fought in the German army; in the film, flashbacks show Hans Epp in the Foreign Legion and, afterwards, in the police force. He loses his job as a policeman through being unable to rebuff the advances of a pretty prostitute, and in becoming a coster-monger, he loses the woman he loves - the job is not sufficiently respectable - and the girl who replaces her, Irmgard, turns out to be treacherous, while Fassbinder's pious Catholic grandmother is portrayed

Suicide of a costermonger. Hans Hirschmüller as Hans Epp in *The Merchant of the Four Seasons* (1971).

The bar sequence in which Hans, feeling unwanted and superfluous, disobeys the doctor's warning about alcohol.

in the film as a feelingless old woman, ashamed of the son who pushes a cart, but proud of him later when he has an assistant to do the selling: now he can be regarded as the owner of a firm. In actuality, Fassbinder's uncle was selling his wares from a cart in the hope of accumulating enough money to make himself respectable by buying a shop;[35] in the film it is only the affronted family that is concerned about respectability.

After suffering so much loneliness during childhood, Fassbinder could readily identify with characters who feel isolated, as Hans Epp does after being enfeebled by a heart attack. While he is in hospital, Irmgard starts an affair with a man called Anzell, and when Hans is warned that he must never again do strenuous work, he unknowingly employs this man, until the jealous wife, unwilling to tolerate an alliance between the two men, tricks her husband into sacking Anzell. As his next assistant he takes an old friend from the Foreign Legion, who gradually usurps not only his place in the business but his place in relation to his wife and child. Depressed and redundant, Hans purposefully drinks himself to death in the local bar. The emotions and the tensions are as straightforward and commonplace as in any Hollywood tearjerker, but this is an unsentimental movie which struck an unfamiliar note with its realistic picture of unexceptional people in provincial Germany. Fassbinder was beginning to find that he could address - if not yet reach - an audience as wide as Hitchcock's with films as thoughtful as Godard's.

The Hermaphrodite Psyche

'While he's an obsessive worshipper of women, he also persecutes them obsessively. He does both things at once. His psyche is fifty per cent woman and fifty per cent man.' That's what Ingmar Bergman said about Strindberg,[36] and it could equally well be said about Fassbinder. Like many bisexual and homosexual men, he playfully acknowledged his dual identity by giving himself and his friends female nicknames. He called himself Mary, while Kurt Raab was Emma Potato, Harry Baer was Ilse Zott, Dieter Schidor was Kitty Babuffke, Mike McLernon was Masha, Michael Ballhaus was Sonja, Peter Kern was Paula. At other times he angrily rejected the female half of himself; Freudians might say that this was what he was doing when he became violent with women.

Discussing bisexuality in his book *Playing and Reality*, D.W. Winnicott gives the case-history of a middle-aged man who came to him after years of switching from one psycho-analyst to another. Once, in the middle of a session, Winnicott heard himself saying: 'I know perfectly well you're a man, but I'm listening to a girl and I'm telling this girl: "You're talking about penis-envy."' The patient, after a silence, answered: 'If I were to tell anyone about this girl, I'd be called mad.' Winnicott offered to take full responsibility - he was the one who had seen the girl;[37] but if Fassbinder was suffering from penis-envy, there was no-one to share the responsibility. Film was a form of therapy in which he could project his identity into the glamorous men and women who spoke his dialogue and obeyed his instructions, but in overworking so drastically and indulging himself so recklessly, he was constantly appealing for help. Like Strindberg he had no difficulty in finding lovers eager to help him, but like Strindberg he savaged those who loved him most. Nor does the resemblance to Strindberg end there. Each of them was good at writing about women because in doing so he could write about himself while taking sides against himself.

At the same time, Fassbinder needed to think of himself as a man with a secure moral anchorage, and his filming was motivated partly by the wish to feel that he was exposing injustice, whether in family history or in the recent history of Germany. Like many of the generation which came politically of age in 1968, he believed that compromises were still being made, no less reprehensible than those his parents' generation had made in order to survive under Hitler. Reproachful feelings towards his family merge with guilt feelings about Germany's past, making him equally uncertain about personal identity and national identity. He felt isolated, fatherless, uncomfortably aware of authoritarianism and racial prejudice in the older generation. The climacteric violence of *I Only Want You to Love Me* occurs after the owner of a bar, behaving intolerantly both towards strangers - an old couple who irritate him by holding hands in his bar - and towards his own son, reminds Peter of Fascism and of his father. He kills the man.

This almost unmotivated murder releases a pressure which has been building up inside Peter from the beginning. Talking about masochism to an interviewer, Fassbinder explained: 'Everyone who comes into the world is not taken seriously as a human being, because obviously it's difficult for an adult to take such a little unformed thing seriously. As time passes, the parent becomes the figure which the child in one respect accepts as dominant, which means that all through their lives they will accept dominant figures while at the same time trying to destroy this dominance in order to exist. Actually a child develops a dual need for dominance and destruction, which is to say that one becomes sadistic and masochistic at the same time.'[38] Behind Peter's reckless extravagance is self-destructive masochism; his sadism is suppressed until this final climax. Behind Fassbinder's political consciousness was an uneasy awareness of his own sado-masochism.

He was ostentatiously reckless in his style of living: unlike Peter, he could earn enough to be inordinately generous, but he could not afford to be as voracious and intemperate as he was in eating, drinking, working and taking drugs. The more successful he became, the more he managed – unlike Peter – to free himself from any need to suppress or even to disguise his sadism. Freud used the word 'sadism' in three distinct senses. Sometimes he meant the aggression which is integral to all normal sexuality; sometimes he was referring to a stage in development when infantile narcissism asserts its independence through rebellious action; and sometimes he meant the perversion which arises when the aggressive impulse eclipses all the other elements in sexuality. In Fassbinder's sadism there was a hangover from infantile rebelliousness, while he carefully cultivated his own aggressiveness, using it privately as a weapon and professionally as a tool. When directing actors he would often be aggressive with them; while acting himself, and while making films, the aggression would be aimed at the audience.

Some of his films were motivated partly by the feeling that the audience needed to be punished or at least rebuked for coming to terms so readily with Nazism or with what remained of it in Germany. At other times Fassbinder was content to feel that he could distribute punishments and rewards among the actors by giving a gratifying part to an actor or punishing an actress with one that degraded her or made her look plain. The roles which he offered to his mother – and which she invariably accepted – ranged between frigid busybodies and likeable middle-aged women. His casting of her was a weather-vane indicating the present state of his feelings towards her.[39] In childhood he had possessed neither the confidence to express his feelings nor the power to establish the relationships he wanted; as a film-maker he could conduct them in and around the work that made other people dependent on him.

At the same time he strenuously rejected the values his mother had imposed on him. His appearance mattered to him enormously: he invested a great deal of thought, energy, time and money in choosing clothes, but not in order to look elegant. He cultivated a shabby, dishevelled, slightly disreputable look. The bulky leather jackets, the ill-fitting jeans, the frayed, buttonless shirt and the shabby boots were all belated protests against the family's starchy respectability. He liked to wear his battered felt hat indoors, and refused to clean the nails on his nicotine-stained fingers, but according to his close friend Kurt Raab, he took baths more often than the average German, though his beard was usually uncombed and his hair unkempt.[40]

It was as if he went on needing to assert that no-one had the power to

impose standards of behaviour on him. Even if he damaged himself in the process of breaking the rules, he would still go on breaking them. Compulsive about proving that he was free, he was unaware how much the compulsion was restricting his freedom.

During his Munich childhood, he had not felt free, even during the long periods when he was unsupervised. He felt more in charge of his own destiny when, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, he went to live with his father in Cologne, where he stayed for two or three years. Previously he must have idealised the world of the absent doctor, especially as his mother, uncertain of how long she had to live, had made an effort not to denigrate the man who might soon be in sole charge of her son.[41] Hellmuth Fassbinder had been an able doctor, popular with his patients, but he had been struck off the medical register – because of drunkenness, according to one version of the story; because of illegal abortions, according to another. He had bought a few dilapidated lodging houses, and unscrupulously he had used partitions to make the larger rooms into two or three smaller rooms. The rooms were so squalid that his only tenants were immigrant workers. By the end of the sixties the German Economic Miracle had attracted about two million workers from countries where wages were low. Officially they were designated *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) but they were often called *Fremdarbeiter* (foreign workers), which implicitly associated them with the slave labourers of the Nazis. They were disliked and exploited.

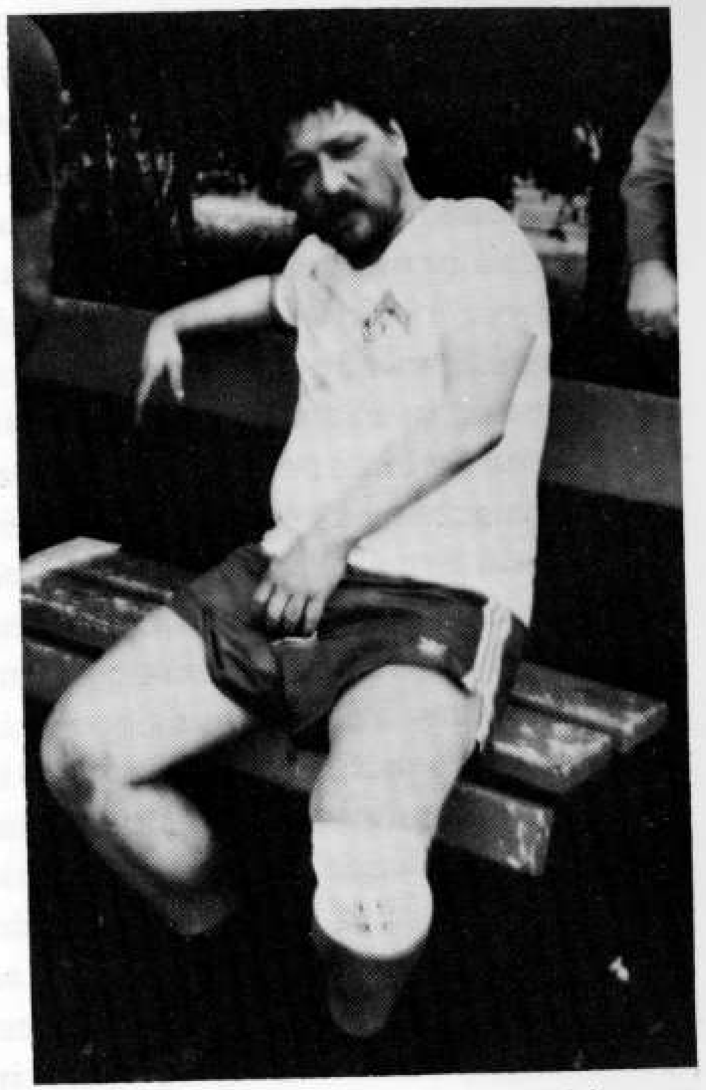
In Cologne Rainer was given the job of collecting rent from his father's *Gastarbeiter* tenants. The experience was crucial: he was suddenly in touch with a group of outsiders, a persecuted minority, and he felt a strong affinity with them.[42] Some of his films, including *Katzelmacher* (1969) and *Fear Eats the Soul* (1973), centre on immigrant workers. '*Katzelmacher*' is a Bavarian term of abuse for an immigrant worker from the Mediterranean countries. His importance as a film director depends on his ability to translate his neurosis into cinematic fiction. Devoid of sentimentality, the films have a hard-edged objectivity that make him seem immune to self-pity, though at one level he is motivated by little else.

In Cologne he did a variety of jobs, putting up wallpaper and decorating rooms. But while helping his father to exploit the defenceless immigrants, he felt quite affectionate towards them. At the same time his familiarity with prostitution made him aware of love as a commodity that could be sold, even to underpaid immigrants. He entered into a partnership with a good-looking blue-eyed boy he met in one of the gay bars. They both used padding, but Dodo Kier wore drag with a padded bra, while Rainer, who wore tight trousers, stuffed rolled-up socks into the front of his underpants. Most of their clients were immigrant workers.[43]

Two of the three most important sexual relationships in Fassbinder's life were to be with dark-skinned men, who were comparatively ill at ease in German society, and one of them was insecure in his command of the German language. The first man to give Fassbinder happiness in a love relationship was a Greek. When they went to see Fassbinder's mother, Rainer was told that it would have been better if he had picked a German, and preferably an educated one, so that at least it would have been possible to carry on a decent conversation. (This story exists in different versions. Just as he fed material from his life into his fictions, he fed fiction into his life, like a cook who keeps two stockpots and robs one to enrich the other.) The situation with the disapproving mother is reversed in *Fear Eats the Soul*: here the reactionary protest comes from the younger generation, and it is a middle-aged mother who involves herself in an unconventional liaison. An ageing charwoman, widowed and lonely, marries a young immigrant worker. Overcoming any lingering feelings of resentment about his mother's seventeen-year-old lover, Fassbinder projected sympathetically into the loneliness of both partners, showing how they save each other from feeling unwanted. Besides loneliness, they have in common the gentleness that often results from oppression: for both of them, survival depends on inhibiting aggressions. They are both portrayed sympathetically, but Fassbinder provided himself with a safety valve for his feelings about his mother: he cast himself as the husband of her daughter, a vindictive young man who smashes the television set in the room of the newly married couple.

Fassbinder's body was that of an overgrown baby. According to Kurt Raab, 'It looked so soft you'd think there were no bones in it. His legs, sturdy though they were, looked like the kicking legs of an outsize infant. The tantrums he often threw, even while in the bath, made the resemblance to a baby really undeniable. His skin, which never tanned in the sun, was pale, sickly, transparent, without a single tuft of hair on it ... His trunk was neither broad nor hefty, but slender; his hips were not narrow, but in the years when he had not yet acquired a pot belly, not yet put on weight, everything already contributed to an impression of roundness.'

His demeanour corresponded to his physique. 'He always seemed a bit doltish and ungainly ... And he often did what dreamy infants do while exploring their own body, suddenly discovering their penis and lingering on it with curiosity: lost in thought, he simply thrust his hand under the waistband of his trousers, kneading, scratching, foraging around, grabbing at himself, quite unembarrassed, while onlookers would think he was going out of his way to be offensive.'[44]


Unaccustomed exercise takes its toll.

Life became unpleasant when his mother married Wolf Eder. He was seventeen years older than she was, and authoritarian in outlook. He was so hostile to the son of her first marriage that Rainer, who had been living on his own for years, moving from room to room, was not allowed in the house. He could visit his mother only on Sundays, when his step-father went out for long walks. When Eder died in 1971, Fassbinder felt liberated and revitalised.[45] It was only a few weeks later that he started work on *The Merchant of the Four Seasons*, which achieved a higher standard – and reached a wider audience – than any of his previous films. In the film, Kurt, Hans Epp's brother-in-law, a journalist, is vitriolically characterised, and in later life Fassbinder would punish other people in the same way that his step-father had punished him. Like discarded lovers, friends who fell out of favour would be told explicitly, through an intermediary, never to show their face in his presence.[46]

Fassbinder's experience of prostituting himself in Cologne must have been reassuring: his body was worth paying for, even if men who bought it were dark-skinned immigrants. And just as prostitution had never struck him as abnormal, sexuality had never seemed a matter for shame or privacy. Boys in the street compared the size of their organs and competed in how far they could piss, or, later, in how quickly they could achieve orgasm through masturbation. Nor were they less competitive or more inhibited in comparing notes about experiences with girls.[47]

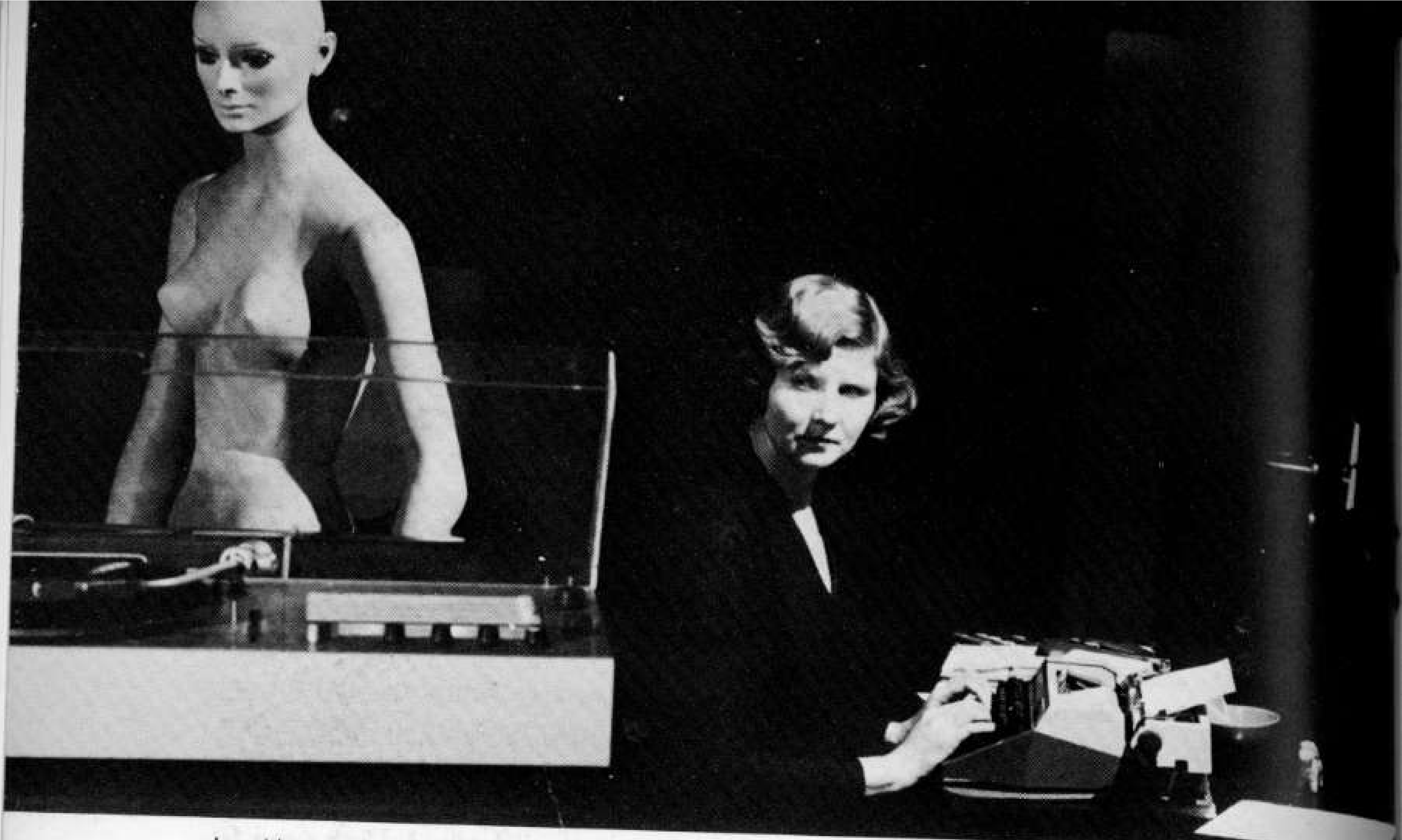
This helps to explain one of the most extraordinary contradictions in a personality that was full of contradictions: the combination of self-confidence and self-condemnation. He felt that he was ugly, but as one of his friends put it, 'he could flirt with his ugliness'. Fundamentally he was shy, but he encouraged himself to burst out into violently aggressive or exhibitionistic behaviour. The hysteria was often genuine, but he could also fake it in order to get his own way by frightening people, and to a large extent his life consisted of putting on a performance, living up to the public image that was partly his own creation and partly that of the press. But he never overcame his shyness. Renate Leiffer, who worked as his production assistant on a series of productions between 1972 and 1980, has described how he used her as a messenger when he was nervous of directing the actors face-to-face. Like many bullies, he was a coward. Some of the actors he used regularly could easily be reduced to tears or hysteria, and this was a way of making them dependent on him. He would direct Irm Hermann and Kurt Raab mainly by telling them how bad they were. 'That's what he liked, just to make them cry, and then he would build them up again. He could destroy you, and then, two minutes later, he felt pity. Then he just embraced you and said: "Well, I didn't mean it like that", and he liked you again because you were crying because of him.'[48]

Shyness was also behind his habit of going around with large groups of people: he felt protected, he was not having to face the world on his own. Inside the fat, arrogant film director was a frightened little boy who found it an enormous strain to put on a show of aggressive self-confidence. Though he seldom failed to get what he wanted, the effort helped to age him and to sap his spontaneity. Towards the end of his life, according to Renate Leiffer, his laughter was not always genuine. 'People wanted him to laugh, but it was not a real laugh, it didn't come out from inside.'[49]

During the last years of his life, fame was making it relatively easy to impose his will on others, but he had also acquired great expertise in the art of making people pliable. In 1982, during the filming of *Querelle*, several of the heterosexual actors playing homosexual parts were resistant to lines he wanted them to speak and actions he wanted them to perform. Franco Nero made up his mind that he was not going to say: 'I feel like a woman with no breasts', and his agent telephoned the producer, Dieter Schidor, to inform him. Schidor warned Fassbinder, whose answer was that Nero would say the line. Before the crucial moment came, Fassbinder picked ferociously on an electrician and threw a violent tantrum, shouting and abusing the man, who had done nothing wrong. The result was that Nero was sufficiently frightened to speak the line without protest, and afterwards Fassbinder was as pleased as a little boy at having got his own way.[50] By this time he was highly experienced in stage-managing quarrels for the sake of improving a production, whether by recasting a part or merely by bringing an actor to heel. But his mastery over sophisticated techniques of imposing his will did not always help him to overcome his boyish timorousness. Though Jeanne Moreau arrived in Berlin a week before she was due to start working on the film, he avoided her during the day and refused to have dinner with her in the evening. Dieter Schidor reports that after directing her first scene, 'he came running back like a little boy and he said: "I've just given her the only acting advice she needs. I said to her: 'You just need to be great', and now I don't need to say anything any more."'[51]

Fassbinder's adult life would not have been what it was if he had not been obsessive about winning power over other people. He had a genius for intimacy with both men and women. With his extraordinarily beautiful eyes and his ability to 'flirt with his ugliness', he could create situations in which people would talk freely about their innermost secrets, responding to the interest he showed in them and feeling unbounded trust in him. Some people strongly disliked him at first sight, but few people, on meeting him, felt neutral or indifferent, and often he would succeed in converting violent antipathy into strong sympathy, as he would in converting love into hate, though this was sometimes more difficult. Many of those who loved him had a masochism which enabled him to tighten his hold over them by treating them badly.

In *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* - a title which parodies that of Frank Capra's *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* - the daughter questions Petra about her inconsiderateness towards her adoring assistant, Marlene, who uncomplainingly - the character never speaks - works out designs on the drawing board, prepares food and drink, serves it, dances with Petra when she is required to. She has been a lover, she is now content to be a partner who is given no credit, a companion, a servant; in giving orders to her, Petra is peremptory and viciously abusive. 'So why do you treat Marlene so badly,



Irm Hermann as Marlene, Petra's slave-like secretary, between dummy and typewriter.

Hanna Schygulla as Karin and Margit Carstensen as Petra, overdressed in comparison with the nude figures in the painting on the wall of Petra's sumptuously feminine flat.

Margit Carstensen in one of the many wigs she wears as Petra in *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972).

Mama?' asks Gaby. The answer is 'Because she deserves no better and because she doesn't want it to be any different. She's happy the way things are, understand?' Gaby does not understand, but Petra is right. At the end of the film, when she apologises to Marlene, offering her a better deal, with more fun and a more collaborative relationship, Marlene's reaction is to put a record on the gramophone: 'The Great Pretender'. Then she packs her possessions into a suitcase. Fassbinder's point is that she is afraid of freedom and of what goes with it – the need to take responsibility for her own life: 'She has always simply followed orders, and never had to make her own decisions. When she finally leaves Petra, she is not, I think, heading for freedom but going in search of another slave-existence.'[52]

The part of Marlene was played – most effectively – by the tight-lipped Irm Hermann, whose relationship with Fassbinder had not been dissimilar to Marlene's with Petra. When he first met her, Irm was working as a secretary for the ADAC, the German equivalent to the Automobile Association. She looked rather like a taller, younger version of Fassbinder's mother, and in the same way that it was satisfying for him to gain power over his mother by making her act in his films – putting her into a position where she would depend on him for reassurance, and would carry out his instructions – it was desirable to gain possession of Irm. They met at an exhibition in the Film Museum, introduced to each other by a girl called Marite Greiselis, who had been at drama school with him. 'He was quite young then,' Irm says, 'with pimples all over his face, rather shabbily dressed. He was actually more repellent than attractive, just on the outside.' Soon afterwards she received a telephone call from him, inviting her to meet him in a bar, where he offered her a part in a short film. At first she demurred, but then gave in to his promises that he could provide her with all the help she would need. It was while he was directing her that she fell in love with him. 'The way he pulled an old bathing wrap on me, it was so intimate, almost like sleeping together . . . I could have gone down on my knees to him, I found him so wonderful. I'd have done anything for him.' She soon became totally dependent on him, while he was no less dependent on her. 'I was never allowed to do anything on my own – not for a second.'[53] As a child he had been powerless to stop his mother from going away, but here was a more pliable version of her, totally at his disposal. He took possession of her life, opened her mail, cross-questioned her when she took longer over the shopping than he thought she should have done. At first he was more possessive than she was, but not for long. Whether he was resenting the degree of his dependence on her, or punishing her vicariously for the shortcomings of his mother, he became sadistic.

Fassbinder with his mother in 1976.

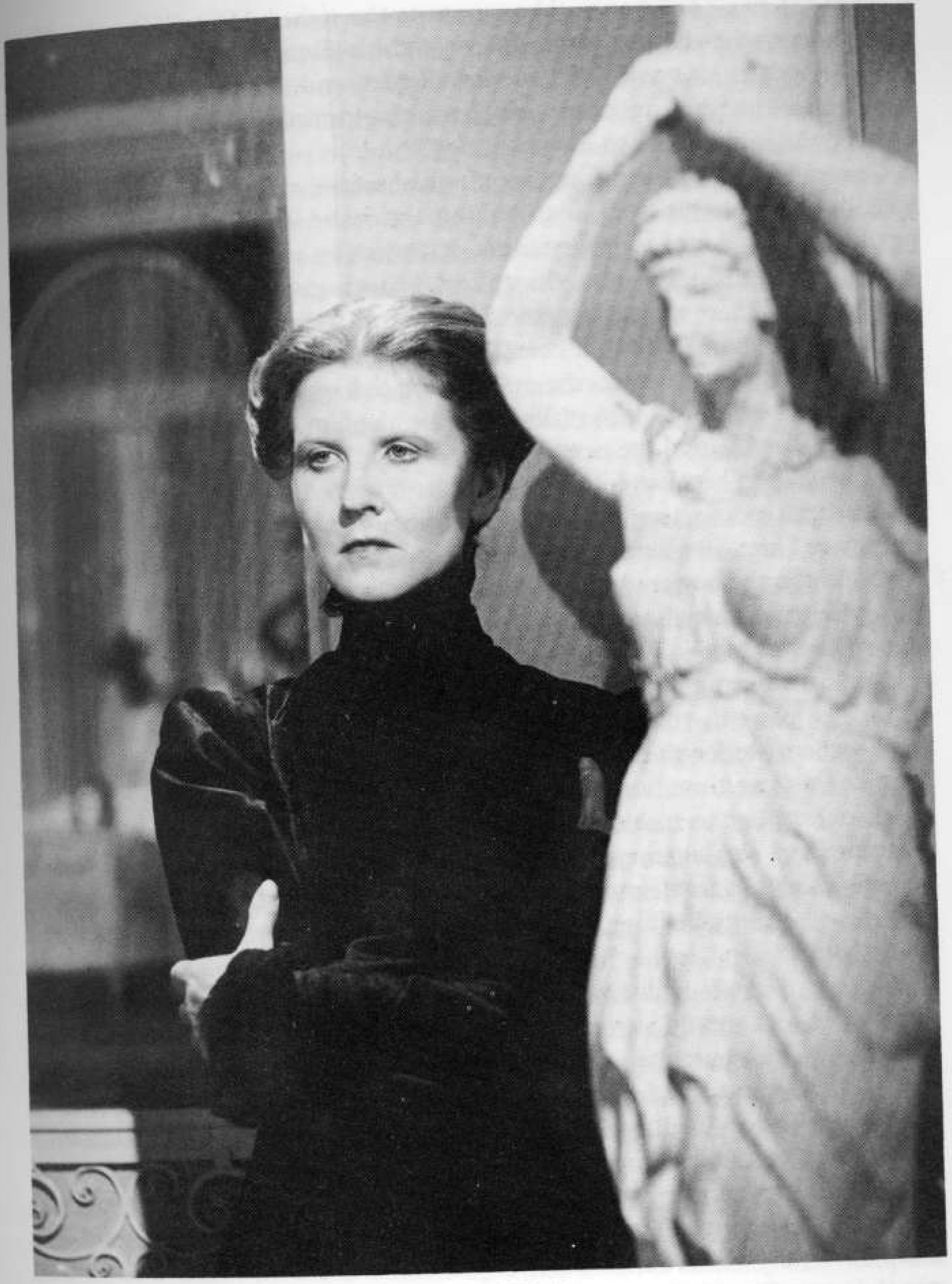
At first he merely took advantage of her infinite willingness to devote her life to his needs. After moving in to the flat where he was living with a boyfriend, Christoph Roser, she was the breadwinner. Roser did the housework while Fassbinder concentrated on writing a screenplay. In addition to her secretarial job, Irm worked hard as Fassbinder's unofficial agent. She took time off to travel through the Federal Republic, visiting television stations and minor film producers, trying to sell his scripts and to get him work as an actor by showing his photograph. In spite of her belief in his genius, and in spite of the fear he inspired by berating her savagely when she returned with no good news, she failed with the scripts, but she succeeded in getting a part for him in a documentary film made for the army. He played a soldier on trial in *Tony's Friends* directed by Paul Vasil. It was here that he met two actors he would subsequently use a great deal – Ulli Lommel and Peter Chatel.

Convinced that he was going to marry her, Irm told him all her secrets. Her father had been fifty-six when she was born, her mother forty-eight, and they were so ashamed of having a baby that they tried to pass her off as the child of their twenty-two-year-old daughter. These were the facts Fassbinder adduced in a 1980 interview, discussing whether anyone could be 'a born victim'. Irm, he said, 'finds her identity or her pleasure only in suffering, in being oppressed'.[54] She was not a born victim, but her parents' attitude had made her take pleasure in feeling that she was sacrificing herself. In the same interview he confirms that *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* had been written partly about his relationship with her.

Certainly he gave her plenty of opportunities to think that she was sacrificing herself. Because Christoph was so jealous of her, they moved into her flat, but she did not have him to herself for long. Peer Raben, an actor from the Action Theater, moved in, and the two boys shared the double bed while Irm slept on the floor.[55]

Fassbinder frequently beat her up, sometimes in public places, and sometimes in the presence of Action Theater actors. When she threatened to jump out of the window, he laconically encouraged her to go ahead. In fact she made three suicide attempts. After he'd made her hand all her money over to him, and then announced he was leaving her, she took forty sleeping tablets. When he found her unconscious, he thought she was merely faking, and he started to hit her. Then he called an ambulance. In hospital she was unconscious for two days, during which he would ring up at hourly intervals for news.[56]

Though he went on using her as an actress from his first short film *The City Tramp* (1965) until *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1979–80), he almost invariably cast her sadistically, taking pleasure in frustrating her ambition to wear elegant costumes and play sophisticated characters. She was intensely jealous of the roles he gave to Hanna Schygulla and Margit Carstensen. 'Really I wanted to be Hanna,' she says. 'I really wanted to be the good ones, the beautiful ones. I was permanently dissatisfied.'[57] He enjoyed her jealousy and her vulnerability, and enjoyed telling her in front of actors and technicians that she was just a stupid cow: he would justify his behaviour by saying it was only after being reduced to tears that she acted at her best. Others took their cue from him, knowing they would please him by abusing her. She noticed that Harry Baer, his lover and production assistant, was quite affable to her in Fassbinder's absence, but hateful in his presence. Fassbinder liked her to feel that he was using her in films only in frigid or lacklustre roles. This mattered all the more to her because she thought of her characters as images of her which he was relaying to the world. In his television adaptation of Ibsen's *The Doll's House*, *Nora Helmer* (1973) he gave her a small part and directed her without



Irm Hermann as Johanna in *Effi Briest* (1972–4).

speaking to her: 'Tell her to take a pace to the right.' After *Women in New York* (1977) she did not work in any of his films until he made *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. He gave her only a small part, and far from being conciliatory, he taunted her until tears were running down her make-up. He then ordered the cameraman to start shooting.[58]

Generally, during the allocation of punishments, rewards and compensations that went on during his film-making, the desire for revenge was a greater factor than the desire to be generous, but when he married Ingrid Caven in 1970, some compensation was due to Irm. She was given no advance warning. On the day of the wedding, they met in the bank, where he had just drawn out about 40,000 marks. He told her: 'I'm getting married today,' and gave her 500 marks. By two o'clock she and Hanna Schygulla were drunk in a restaurant. Irm had a better part than usual in the film they were shooting, *The American Soldier*, and the next day they worked on her favourite scene.[59]

His cruelty to her was not merely private cruelty. It was part of a performance he put on for an audience consisting of the group that invariably surrounded him. She made no secret of her sexual dependence on him, while he revelled in the power it gave him. After she had started to follow an Indian guru, and had turned vegetarian, she ordered a salad for her main course when she was one of his guests at a large dinner party in a Frankfurt restaurant. He caught her eye, winked at the others and said: 'Irm, for each steak I see you eat, you get one fuck.' The laughter did not make her blush; meekly she signalled to the waiter and ordered a steak. But she had eaten no meat for a long time, and though she struggled bravely to overcome her revulsion, she had to rush out with her hand clapped to her mouth. When she emerged from the lavatory, she sat down proudly beside Fassbinder, trying to look into his eyes. He made sure that he had the attention of his audience. 'I said eat it, not puke it up. If you want a fuck, you've got to keep the meat inside you.'[60]

The only time she had the upper hand was when they talked about having a child. He was greatly attracted to the idea of paternity: to become a father would be to demonstrate irrefutably that he was no longer a child himself. Though she knew how much he wanted a baby, she had no intention of playing her trump card too soon, and she persisted with the pill. Whenever her period was late, he grew excited, and in 1977, when she was pregnant by a man who was no longer with her, Dietmar Roberg, Fassbinder offered to marry her. She refused, but when she was having the baby, he rang up the clinic to enquire about her. It was a boy, and she called it Franz, because this was the name Fassbinder suggested in a telegram.[61]

Fassbinder made another attempt, more bizarre and more damaging, to realise his fantasy of paternity. Of his three principal lovers, the second was a Berber in his mid-thirties, El Hedi Ben Mohammed Salem M'Barek Mohamed Mustafa. Fassbinder had met him in a Paris sauna, where he made money, when he was out of work, by selling himself to homosexual or bisexual gentlemen.[62] Fassbinder made Salem's face famous by using him as Ali in *Fear Eats the Soul*, but the film, which was intended as a reward or compensation, was not made until the relationship was nearing its end, and to help him through such a demanding role, Fassbinder had to give him each intonation by speaking the word, had to indicate each pause, and to tell him where he should be looking.[63]

When their relationship began, Salem had a wife and five children in Algeria. It occurred to Fassbinder that he could found a family with himself and Salem at the head of it. They went together to Bir el Latif, where Salem informed his wife that he considered himself divorced, and he brought two of his sons back to Germany, the eleven-year-old Abdelkader and the nine-year-old Hamdan. Like many of those who start families in a more orthodox way, Fassbinder had no clear idea of the difficulties that lay ahead. The two boys were temporarily installed with Fassbinder's mother, while Kurt Raab, who was acting as Fassbinder's assistant, looked for a family home in Cologne, where they were due to begin work on Fassbinder's television series *Eight Hours Are Not a Day*. But he had decided by then that one son would be enough, so Hamdan was given to Hans Hirschmüller, who had played the lead in *The Merchant of the Four Seasons*. He already had three children, who gave the newcomer a bad time, while Fassbinder soon tired of having an eleven-year-old Arab boy in his flat, and confined him to one room, which he was allowed to leave only for visits to the lavatory. When Salem felt humiliated after quarrels with Fassbinder, he vented his spleen on the unfortunate boy, who was frequently beaten. He lived in a state of perpetual anxiety. He had been ordered never to let Fassbinder see him, and when guests came to the flat, as they often did, he would creep out to the terrace. Kurt Raab felt sorry for the boy, and after taking him over for weekends, he offered to take him over altogether. Fassbinder was glad to be rid of the boy, and Kurt Raab kept him, while his brother, Hamdan, was soon sent back to Salem's sister.[64] One way in which Fassbinder continued a dialogue with his childhood was through his relationship with his mother. In his fantasies and in his screenplays he was constantly remodelling the past; in reality he was gaining a degree of control over the woman who had once, it seemed, had complete control over him.

In 1969, when his step-father was still alive, Fassbinder arrived, with a film-crew, at the flat where he was persona non grata. 'I want to shoot here,' he said. Wolf Eder protested that there was no room; it was a two-and-a-half room flat. But the crew was allowed to assemble all the equipment. Fassbinder's mother had played in his short film *The Little Chaos*, but when he asked her to sit down on the sofa, she assumed that she was doubling for an actress. He told her to say: 'Do you need money, my son?' and as soon as she complied, she heard him tell the cameraman: 'Right, we'll take that.' Alarmed, she asked him what was going on. 'You'll have to do it,' he said. 'I can't pay an actress of your generation.'[24] The film was *Gods of the Plague*, and the role was that of an unsympathetic mother who feels little love for her younger son, the main character, preferring his repulsive brother. Having given his mother a new identity as the mother of the two gangsters, he gave her a new identity as an actress. Lilo Pempeit was the name that had appeared in the credits of *The Little Chaos* – Lile is short for Liselotte – and Lilo Pempeit was the name she retained in all the films she made for him over the next twelve years.

It must have been gratifying for him to have her in a position of dependence. Nervous, she concentrated hard on carrying out his instructions, while he did his best to give her confidence. Going against his normal habits, he rehearsed scenes with her before shooting, patiently explaining what he wanted her to do. But there was an unmistakable tension between mother and son. 'Fassbinder himself,' writes Raab, 'made sure that the mahogany furniture was handled carefully and that nothing was made dirty. We no longer dared to talk loudly; all the preparations were made in whispers. Even when he said: "Mummy, now you must turn round slowly . . . No, Mummy, you must lift the telephone higher, I told you," it did not sound intimate, there was no warmth to be heard in it. This "Mummy" hurt one's ears.'[65]

After the death of Wolf Eder, Fassbinder and Raab went to the flat almost every Sunday for coffee and cakes. Fassbinder also bought her expensive presents, including a colour television set and a fur coat. Later on, mainly to get him out of trouble with the income tax authorities, she took over the book-keeping for his company, Tango Film Production, and went on keeping his accounts for ten years, not without considerable anxiety about debts and creditors. But she performed the task with discretion and propriety, often leaving the actors uncertain about how much was due to them.[66]

2 The Group and the Team

'Once I have inspired disgust and universal horror, then I have conquered solitude.'— *Baudelaine*

Though he had been frustrated throughout his school career in his drive to get himself accepted as ring-leader, Fassbinder was only nineteen when he directed his first film, only twenty when he found he could make a man and a woman sexually dependent on him simultaneously, and only twenty-two when he discovered that a combination of talent, determination, energy, aggressiveness and charm gave him the power to make a group of trained actors accept him as their leader.

Drama School

When he came back to Munich from Cologne, his intention was to work during the day and take evening classes in drama (*Theaterwissenschaft*). Instead, with the encouragement of his mother, he went in the evenings to drama school, the Fridl-Leonhard-Studios, 'one of the too numerous Munich drama schools, most of which exist for the sole purpose of adding fuel to the superhuman yearning of countless boys and girls to go on the stage, which means the world, and of taking their money.' He found the training no less oppressive than the teaching at school; the Wednesday evening improvisation sessions produced 'the deepest despair on one side and the most brutal sadism on the other. Since then I have seldom seen people taunt and deride other people so mercilessly.' The sadism interested him more than the teaching: his attentiveness, he says, was directed 'entirely on the interaction between pupils and instructors'.[1] Obviously he was exaggerating, as he so often did. Writing about Hanna Schygulla, a fellow-pupil at the drama school, he claims that though he never exchanged a word with her, he knew that she too was focusing her attention entirely on pupil-teacher relationships.[2] She was certainly aware of his presence; he was ugly and fascinating, she says, and she formed the impression he didn't like her.[3] Even if he was exerting himself more as a student of power structures than as a student of acting, he was already impatient to have an audience, and with his friend Heide Simon,

The young Rainer.

another student at the drama school, he would spend hours on trams, playing scenes. Sometimes he was so aggressive with her that members of the captive audience intervened to protect her, only to become angry when they found out it was a performance.[4]

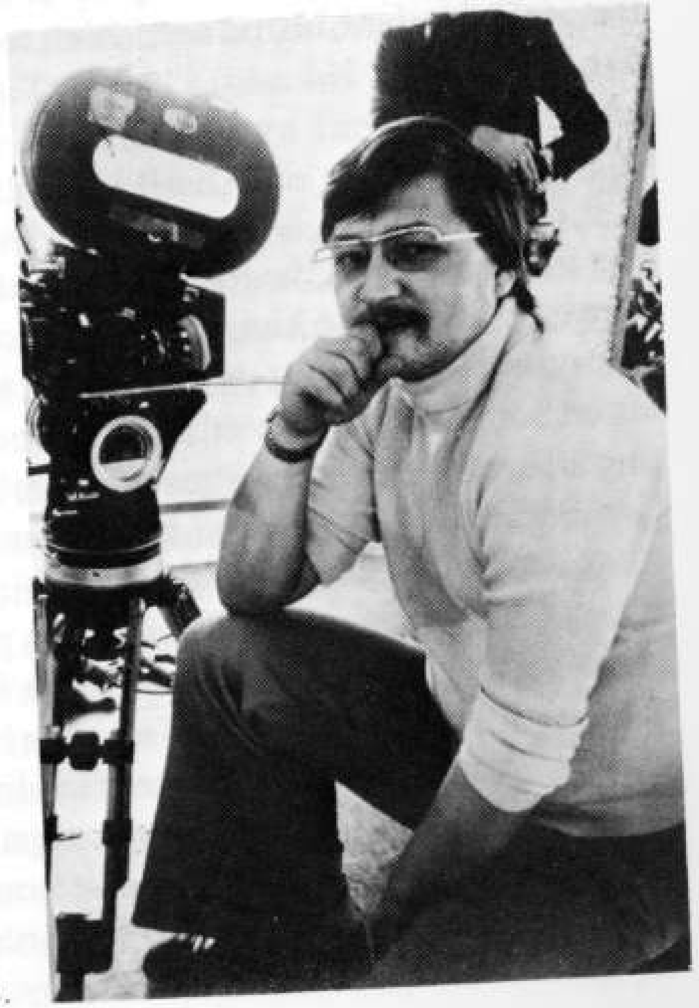
To support himself while he was at the drama school he worked during the day at a series of jobs. For a time he worked in the archive of a newspaper, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and by studying photography he prepared himself for his career in films.

Two Short Films

Fassbinder knew before he started at the drama school that he wanted to be a film director. Soon after he met the young, out-of-work actor, Christoph Roser, they started living together, and Roser, who was not as poor as he seemed, rashly took his new lover into his confidence about the money he had in the bank. It then became unlikely that the money would stay in the bank. Here was an opportunity for Fassbinder to direct a film. He had no trouble in convincing Roser that to invest about 30,000 marks in two short 35-millimetre films would only be to invest the money in himself: he would play the leading part in both films.[5]

Fassbinder enlisted the help of a friend, Michael Fengler, whom he respected as a superior intellect. Fengler was five years older and had studied German and French literature. During the two years they had known each other, Fassbinder had shown Fengler his scripts and asked his advice; they had made plans together to work in the cinema. Now, sooner than they'd expected, they had a chance. Fengler worked as cameraman on the first film and acted in the second; Fassbinder scripted and directed both. The first, a ten-minute film, *The City Tramp*, originated, according to Fassbinder, from his love of Erich Rohmer's 1959 film *The Sign of the Lion*. In Fassbinder's film a tramp finds a pistol and, while having trouble in getting rid of the weapon, he indulges in fantasies of suicide. Rohmer's film shows a tramp in the almost deserted streets of Paris during the summer; the background of Fassbinder's film is autumnal Munich.

He claims that he completed his drama school course, and earned his living during the two years he was training. According to his mother he trained for



Fassbinder filming in 1973.

three years, though Peer Raben, who was directing plays at the Action Theater when Fassbinder joined the company in 1967, is certain that Fassbinder left drama school after less than a year.[6] In any case he was not intent on casting trained actors or drama students in his first film. Apart from Christoph Roser and himself, the cast consisted of Susanne Schimkus, Irm Hermann, and the two Fengler brothers Michael and Thomas.

Fassbinder's second 35-millimetre film was called *The Little Chaos*. It was, he said, 'a little like Godard',[7] but in following Godard's fixation on Hollywood gangster films, he was imitating Hollywood, and not entirely at second hand. The story is about a girl and two boys who rob a woman after entering her flat under pretext of selling subscriptions to an illustrated magazine.

Fassbinder had already made up his mind, while at drama school, that Hanna Schygulla was going to be the star of his films, but there had been no part for her in *The City Tramp*. In *The Little Chaos* she could have played the girl, if only he hadn't forgotten her name. He knew she had abandoned acting to resume her study of literature at the university; she was planning to be a teacher. But though he paid several visits to the university, roaming corridors and hoping that luck would bring him face to face with her, he failed to find her,[8] and the part in the film was played by Marite Greiselis, the girl who had introduced him to Irm; Roser and Fassbinder played the two boys.

The Action Theater

Shy though he was, he had the qualities of a leader, as he discovered when he managed to impose himself on the Action Theater, a group of young Munich actors who had been at drama school together. Ursula Strätz and her husband, Horst Söhnlein, had rented a small suburban cinema in the Müllerstrasse, where they'd been putting on films while rebuilding the auditorium as a theatre. It was Söhnlein who did the reconstruction almost single-handed, building a stage and reorganising the plumbing. Their first theatrical production, Ionesco's *Jacques, or Obedience*, was poorly attended, but it was given eighty performances, mainly because Ursula Strätz didn't know what to do next. One of the actors, Peer Raben, effectively became leader of the group by offering to stage Sophocles's *Antigone*. He directed it rather in the manner of the Living Theatre, the American company which had based itself in Europe since 1963, living as an anarchistic commune and touring. In France during 1968 it had sided passionately with the students, and it had aroused great enthusiasm when it toured Germany. In *Antigone* Raben used four young

actresses in the name part, and one of these was Marite Greiselis, who invited Fassbinder to the première. Arriving with Irm, he hesitated diffidently at the entrance to the auditorium until he had spotted Marite.[9]

He was used to feeling bored in the theatre. 'But here I was excited by what was happening on stage, the way it was happening, and what was being transmitted to the auditorium. Between the actors and the audience something like a trance developed, something like a collective yearning for a revolutionary Utopia. While the performance was still going on, I made an irrevocable decision to work here, in this theatre, with this group. I was not troubled by the slightest doubt about whether they might reject me.'[10] In the bar, after the performance, he sat down uninvited at the big round table reserved for the actors; Irm stood behind his chair. He asked whether he could do anything in the theatre, and he came back to watch every performance of *Antigone*. Ursula Strätz felt attracted to him, while Peer Raben soon began to believe he might have talent, but the others, resenting his intrusion, noticed how he kept trying to bring the conversation round to himself or to subjects on which he could discourse authoritatively.[11] Much to the annoyance of the others, Strätz and Raben offered him the leading part in the production they were planning, Carl Orff's *Astutuli*.

But he did not have to wait for this. After a few days, one of the actors, Anatol von Gardner, who was playing Tiresias, broke his arm during the performance, and Fassbinder promptly offered to learn the part in time to play it the following evening. Being unsubsidised, the group was totally dependent on its takings at the box office, and Fassbinder's offer made it possible for the run to continue with no interruption. According to Irm Hermann, he did learn the whole of the part, but when he appeared on stage he was so nervous that the best he could do was to start each speech and then skip to the final sentence.[12]

Another disaster overtook the small company when Marite Greiselis was stabbed and crippled for life by a drunk and jealous lover, who was playing a small part. According to Heide Simon, who was her flat-mate at the time, Fassbinder sheltered her attacker;[13] he also suggested that Hanna Schygulla should replace Marite as one of the four Antigones, and this time he succeeded in finding his former classmate in one of the university's long corridors. She took over the part with conspicuous success.

Losing his interest in *Astutuli*, Peer Raben found a pretext for abandoning the rehearsals, and the actors began to rally round Fassbinder, who seemed more likely than anyone else to bring the next production into existence: he had boundless energy, formidable determination and a compulsive need for activity. It was his proposal that they should stage Büchner's *Leonce and Lena*, and that the function of director should be shared between four people. Both suggestions were enthusiastically accepted.

This was the period of Flower Power, and Beatles music was introduced into the production. Two of the four directors, Peer Raben and Kristin Peterson, were playing Leonce and Lena; while Ursula Strätz made only impractical suggestions, so Fassbinder, who was playing Valerio, appeared to be motivated by altruism when, in preference to rehearsing his part, he sat out front, watching the other performances and making constructive criticisms. Kurt Raab, who had been running the box office and had acted for the first time in *Antigone*, had disliked Fassbinder from the moment of first seeing him, and had ostentatiously ignored him, but now found him generous, helpful and stimulating. 'You must play King Peter,' Fassbinder said, 'the way the bourgeoisie imagines him.'[14]

Fassbinder was so busy directing the others that he paid scarcely any attention to his own role. The apparent spontaneity of his performance on the first night was due to under-preparation; both audience and critics responded with a surprising warmth to his aggressiveness, 'which probably arose out of the anxiety that the audience might not like me, so I wanted to show them that I disliked them ten times as much, which would not only make it understandable if they didn't like me but make it my responsibility. In this way I thought I would make myself invulnerable. The result was unpredictable: the audience, passive as it usually is, and masochistic, probably, at the same time, found my aggressiveness exciting, direct and enjoyable.'[15] He profited from the experience. Nothing mattered more to him than to feel loved, but his success in the role of Valerio may have encouraged a habit of ingratiating himself both in private and in public by doing the opposite of what most people do when they play for sympathy. He liked to be surrounded almost constantly by a miniature audience, and he liked to put on a virtually non-stop performance, winning sympathy by behaving as if he wanted to alienate it. The way he treated Irm was often obnoxious, as at the dinner party where she was bullied into eating steak, but behaviour like this endeared him to his friends. It was always ex-lovers who came in for the worst treatment. At a dinner party during the shooting of *Querelle*, Günther Kaufmann was told that because he was a nigger he was also an ashtray. He held out his arm and the sheepish guests stubbed out their cigarettes on it.[16] With Kaufmann, as with Irm, Fassbinder would sometimes justify his sadism by claiming that it helped to educe a good performance, while on stage he continued to be aggressive – as we can see from his performance in Ferdinand

Bruckner's *The Sickness of Youth*, an antiteater production directed by Jean-Marie Straub and preserved in his film *The Bridegroom, the Comedienne and the Pimp*.

In the same way that Fassbinder courted approval by behaving as if he wanted to be hated, he could respond to a display of hatred by behaving as if he were being warmly received. This happened at the Zoopalast in Berlin after his film *Love Is Colder than Death* was shown during the Film Festival. When Fassbinder appeared on stage, the audience booed, but he clasped his hands above his head and paced about proudly on the platform as if he were being cheered or as if he were enjoying his unpopularity.[17] At least he had aroused a strongly emotional reaction.

The absence of a father-figure in his childhood had encouraged him to be self-sufficient, and, working at the Action Theater, he instinctively presented himself to the group as a strong father, complementing the maternal but indecisive Ursula Strätz. Kurt Raab testifies: 'For me he was something like a father substitute. He was very concerned about me; he let me tell him about myself, weep on his shoulder, discuss my problems.'[18]

It was Peer Raben who chose and directed the next play, *Hands Up, Johannes*, but he had undermined his own chances of retaining the leadership by entering casually into a sexual relationship with Fassbinder. Some of the actors were sleeping in the theatre, but Raben was living with Strätz in her Holzstrasse flat. Horst Söhnlein was in hospital, and one day she announced that Fassbinder would be too tired to work as a director if he always had to sleep on the stage, and she brought him back to her flat. But then, rather surprisingly, she locked herself into her room, leaving the two men to share the one bed in Raben's room. Later, when Fassbinder was living with Irm in a one-room flat in Ainmüllerstrasse, Raben moved in with them, but his relationship with Fassbinder did not survive the triangular tension for more than a few months.

The next production at the Action Theater was Ferdinand Bruckner's *The Criminals*, which Fassbinder directed single-handed. Hanna Schygulla, who had turned down the part of Lena, rejoined the company, while Fassbinder got rid of the actors he did not want by means of a stratagem that he would often use in his later career: deliberately he provoked an argument, which could be fanned into a quarrel.[19] Peer Raben, who hated quarrelling as much as Fassbinder enjoyed it, went on behaving more like an ally than a rival; later, when Fassbinder dedicated *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* to 'the one who here became Marlene', it was Peer Raben that he meant. The character had been modelled partly on Irm Hermann but mainly on Raben.

Most of the others responded favourably to the qualities that made it possible for the twenty-two-year-old to take control, though his relationship with them was jeopardised by the preferential treatment he gave to Hanna Schygulla, devoting hours of rehearsal time to working with her individually, like a coach.

But again Fassbinder was lucky. What helped him this time to consolidate his power was the insane violence of Horst Söhnlein. Rumours had reached him in hospital that he had reason to be jealous of Fassbinder, and on being discharged, he vented his rage on the theatre building he had himself reconstructed, smashing up the stage, the seats, the box-office and the bar. The converted cinema had to be abandoned, but the solidarity of the group, with Ursula Strätz still in it, had been strengthened.[20]

She now moved in with Fassbinder, Irm and Raben. Fassbinder took the largest room; Raben and Ursula both had small rooms; Irm had no room of her own. To earn money, Raben delivered laundry. It was Fassbinder who told the others what to do. Though he had no moral objection to prostitution, he wanted to have his day free for writing scripts, and this time it was the two girls who had to sell themselves, mainly to immigrant workers, while he sat on the other side of the Nymphenburger Canal in a cafe which was exactly opposite the flat. He could see through the cafe window when the visitors had left the flat.[21]

In his first full-length movie, *Love Is Colder than Death*, the character he plays, Franz, lives with a prostitute, Joanna, who complies unquestioningly with his demands, even when he invites his friend, Bruno, to sleep with her. Cleverly transcribing his own experience, Fassbinder this time implants bourgeois scruples and bourgeois possessiveness in the girl, who is, he says 'stuck in her middle-classness, despite her profession, even worse than the others: she wants to save her bourgeois relationship with Franz by being his whore and even by betraying Bruno and a bank-robbery to the police. She would rather be alone than share Franz with Bruno.'[22] The film was made in the year after the student rebellions of 1968, which had encouraged Fassbinder to believe in communes and collectivity as an alternative to propriety and individual property.

A Show of Democracy

In this period *Mitbestimmung* (democratic control) was a watchword in progressive German theatre, and in theory Fassbinder wanted all decisions to be taken collectively in both his cinematic and his theatrical work, but in willpower he was not only stronger than any of the others individually, he was stronger than they were collectively. When there were disputes, Irm Hermann, who was soon involved as an actress, Peer Raben and Ursula Strätz regularly rallied to his support, while even those who were less in sympathy with him recognised a storehouse of creativity that was likely to guarantee the survival of the group. The first production of 1968 was *Ingolstadt for Example*, his adaptation of Marieluise Fleisser's *The Pioneers in Ingolstadt*, which he co-directed with Peer Raben. They also co-directed the next production, which was *Katzelmacher*, Fassbinder's first play specially written for the group, with parts tailored for individual actors. Fassbinder was fairly despotic with the actors, according to Raben, when they co-directed, imposing postures and groupings which had been conceived - often brilliantly - to form a stage picture. Like Brecht, Fassbinder was good at restraining actors from rhetoric and facile emotionality. 'Keep still,' he used to say. 'Don't do anything. Just speak your lines.' The visual style of these early productions was partly determined by the need to economise by simplifying setting and costumes, but Fassbinder made this into an advantage, evolving a minimalism which extended to the acting: he had been strongly influenced by the films of Jean-Marie Straub. But Fassbinder had little or nothing to say about motivation, and Raben's contribution was to help the actors by giving them reasons for providing what was demanded.[23]

They were united in their determination to go on working in the theatre after Söhnlein had made the old building unusable, but when Ursula Strätz saw that they had no interest in repairing it, she refused to let them go on using the name Action Theater. It was either Raben or Fassbinder who hit on the name antiteater. Ionesco had called his first play, *The Bald-Headed Prima-Donna*, an anti-play, and there had been a nineteenth-century English magazine called *Anti-Theatre*, but the term had no anti-art connotations before the turn of the century. Fassbinder's artistic intentions were no less revolutionary than those of the Surrealists: the idea was to subvert the values and conventions that theatrical tradition was helping to perpetuate. The new group was founded in June 1968, and in July Peter Weiss's *Herr Mockinpott* was staged at the Academy of Arts. The name part was played by Kurt Raab, and the production was directed collectively.

The antiteater

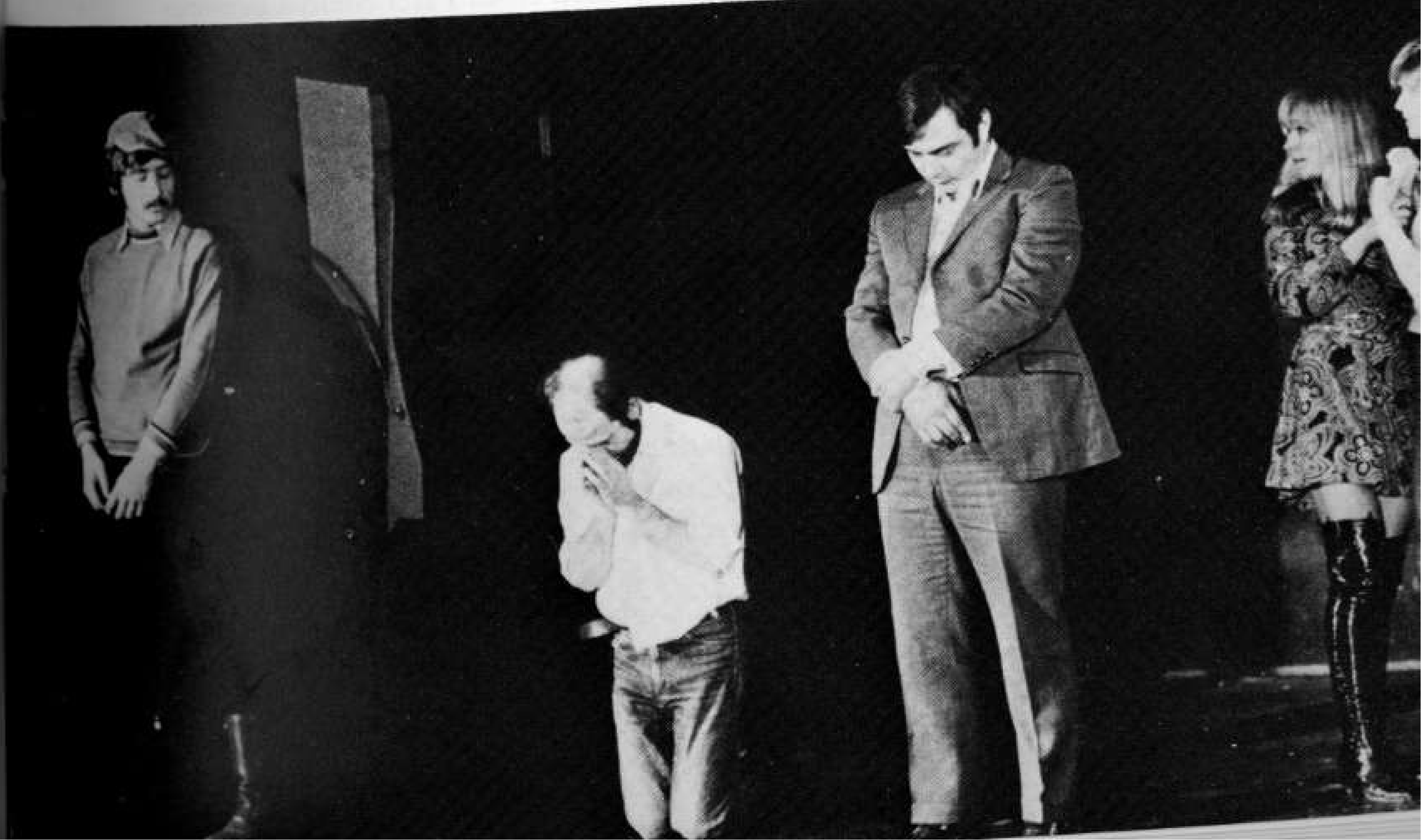
The productions prepared for August were *Lulluhh*, scripted by Ursula Strätz, who co-directed rehearsals with Kurt Raab, and *Orgie Ubuh*, scripted collectively and directed by Fassbinder. Based loosely on Alfred Jarry's *King Ubu*,

The antiteater actors photographed at Feldkirchen in 1970 outside the house where they were living together. In the window are Rudolf Waldemar Brem and Ingrid Caven. Standing, left to right, Margit Carstensen, Hanna Schygulla, Lilith Ungerer, Fassbinder, Günther Kaufmann, Ursula Strätz, Harry Baer (with his arm around her), an unidentified girl and Peer Raben. Kurt Raab is sitting on the right.

it was an orgiastic sequence of beat music, drinking, quotation from Kafka, transvestite striptease, football and group sex. Having no theatre of their own, they arranged to produce it at the Büchner-Theater, but on the first night the manager, Helmut Birninger, censored the performance by blacking it out in the middle of a strip by Kurt Raab. The show, said Birninger, was 'too political and too obscene'.[24] His action created a local scandal not unhelpful to the new company, which moved to a bar called the Witwe Bolte, where the performances were disturbed by noises from the skittle alley underneath the auditorium.

They were not taking enough money at the box office to pay their rent to the landlord and in December 1968, when they staged Fassbinder's adaptation of *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay, Kurt Raab, who was playing Peach (Fassbinder's counterpart to Gay's Peachum) used to beg from the audience during the overture, which should have lasted for three minutes, but sometimes had to be repeated three or four times because his technique was to stop in front of each spectator, not going away until he had been given something.[25]

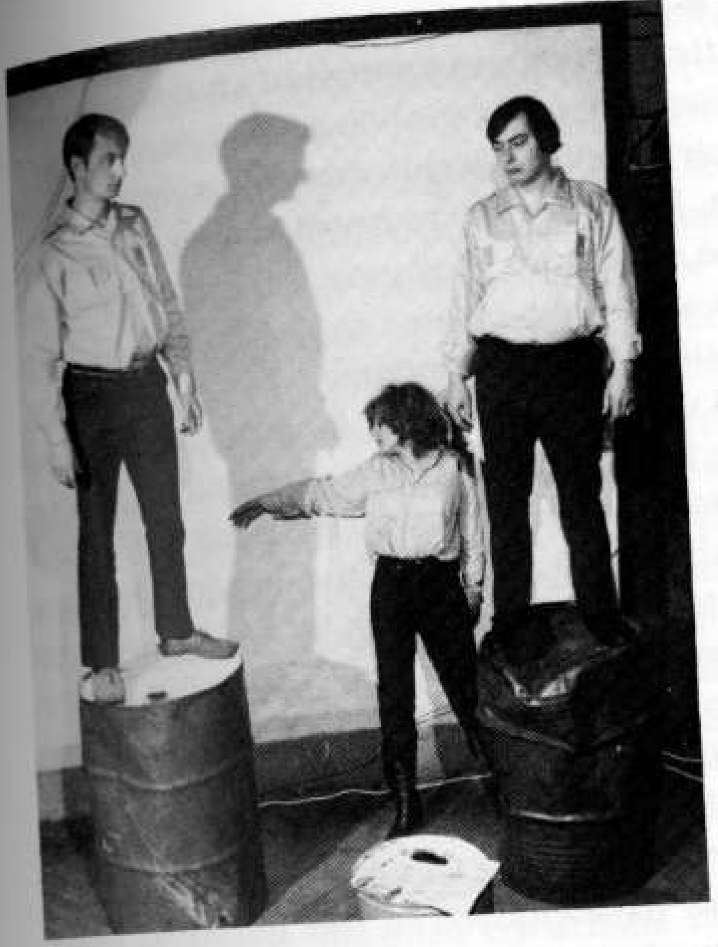
Above: Fassbinder as Mack the Knife with Irm Hermann (on her knees) and Ursula Strätz, in the co-production by him and Peer Raben of *The Beggar's Opera*, his adaptation of John Gay's ballad opera.
Below: Harry Baer, Peter Moland, Kurt Raab, Lilith Ungerer and Irm Hermann (left to right) in the 1969 Bremen production of *Werewolf* by Harry Baer and Fassbinder, co-directed by Peer Raben and Fassbinder.



The success of this production helped Fassbinder to consolidate his power over the group. Newspapers started to show an interest in the company; takings at the box office went up to 30 or 40 marks each evening, and the antiteater was invited to take its production of Goethe's *Iphigenia on Tauris*, which Fassbinder had adapted and directed, to the Forum Theatre in Berlin. When it opened there in August 1968, the audience was rather surprised that the dialogue began with the words: 'I want to fuck you.' Orestes's relationship with Pylades subsequently turned out to be overtly homosexual. Fassbinder's reworking of the text had been designed partly to revenge himself on the play, which had given him more vexation than pleasure, seeming, as it had, to belong in the armoury of those who had been oppressing him with education.

On the other hand he derived, as a director, endless benefit from the alternative education he had culled from the movies. With his excellent visual memory he had accumulated a huge stock of images that served as blueprints for groupings and postures. According to Kurt Raab, he made up his mind before rehearsals began about 'how the characters must confront each other on the stage, and which direction they are going in'. Without making any notes, he memorised the movements he wanted his actors to perform. 'His productions were constructed out of movements – how people approached each other and moved away from each other. And from movements he would gradually build up a character.'[26] Visually he was already enough of a virtuoso to incorporate in his productions allusions to those of other directors, quoting gestures, movements and postures in the way that other people would quote words. In his production of *The Coffee Shop*, for instance, an adaptation of Goldoni's 1750 comedy, he quoted from Peter Stein's provocative production of Goethe's *Tasso*, from his own films and those of Jean-Marie Straub, besides using postures reminiscent of Gary Cooper.[27] For his production of his own play *Katzelmacher* he worked out a highly detailed choreography, even, according to Peer Raben, taking firm decisions about the moments when characters should be seen in profile, and when in full face. Working in a small theatre it was easier to control exactly what the viewer would see than in a theatre when more depended on where he was sitting.

Though the actors had relatively little freedom in Fassbinder's productions, which were fundamentally opposed to the spirit of *Mitbestimmung*, his despotism was acceptable to them because his approach was radically at variance with everything they had been taught in drama school about style and technique. Here was a director who could make an impact on critics and audiences at the same time as leading them in a rebellion against traditional German



Left: Reinhold Gruber, Hanna Schygulla and Kurt Raab (from left to right) in Fassbinder's antiteater production of his own play *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now* in February 1969.

Below: Hanna Schygulla and Ulli Lommel in Fassbinder's first full-length film, *Love Is Colder than Death* (1969).

theatre. But what Raben feels today is that Fassbinder was not taking enough risks, that he was too much of a craftsman and not enough of an artist.[28]

In these antiteater productions Fassbinder was evolving the style that was also to dominate his early films, which he called his antiteater films. In writing for these actors, as in directing them, he knew how to avoid asking for more than they could provide, and, for the most part, they gave the impression of being better film actors than they would have seemed in the hands of any other director, while the stylised acting was accompanied by an insistent visual realism. Peter Handke noticed what differentiated *Love Is Colder than Death* from other movies in the Berlin Film Festival: 'The bed which is slept in has obviously been made by those who sleep in it, and used before the take.'

Meanwhile, in the theatre, what had started as a collective became known as Rainer Werner Fassbinder's antiteater. Subsequently he would talk to interviewers as if he had been rather reluctant to take over leadership of the group. 'After a few experiences,' he told Wolfgang Limmer, 'I always joined groups with the express intention of resisting and refusing to have the function of leadership thrust on me ... I'm quite convinced that it's more as if people look for a leader than as if he looks for a people, the way Moses did. Because of the educational process most people have enjoyed in this country, their yearning for a leader is certainly greater than mine for leadership.'[29] But he virtually contradicted this assertion when he derisively called Peer Raben 'a gentle man, a man who made it scarcely noticeable that he was leader of the group ... I've got something against leaders who are very kind and friendly, and play down their function as leader so that it's scarcely noticeable. I find that dangerous. I think a leader should be open to attack.'[30] In the 1970 film *Beware of a Holy Whore*, which Fassbinder finally made with the group as a statement about his relationship with it, the film director throws himself on the ground, shaking his fists and yelling: 'All of you suck me dry!' To the actors it might have seemed as if Fassbinder was sucking them dry, but to him it seemed as though they had been doing it to him. He complained of them 'that simply by being there, they'd compelled me to do so much ... They'd almost forced me to make ten films a year. They drove me to a certain point of breakdown, to mental and physical breakdown.'[31] It is unlikely that he would have settled in any event for less than a furore of productivity, but certainly the presence of the actors stimulated him: he was writing and directing as well as acting himself, and the only sure way of keeping them in his orbit was to provide a non-stop flow of work.

He talked about making films in an anti-authoritarian way, with everyone involved as a co-author. 'I thought that if I said it often enough, it would be

like that.'[32] But what he said didn't always tally with what he did or even with what he tried to do. When Raben (who was trying to run the company's finances) announced that 'it had been decided' to plough back half the company's income into a film which they would all make together, nobody challenged the decision or asked who had made it. They all wanted to appear in a film. But when *Love Is Colder than Death* was made in 1969 at a cost of 950,000 marks, most of the actors found they had been given walk-on parts, although the company was called Antiteater-Film and the money was their money.[33] Fassbinder and Hanna Schygulla played the two main parts, with a newcomer, Ulli Lommel, in the other most important role. In this story about a criminal who tries to stay independent from the gang, Fassbinder, as has often been pointed out, was indebted to Godard, Straub and Hollywood. He was also indebted to Alexander Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, but when writing about the individual criminal and the gang, what he obviously had in mind was his own situation vis-à-vis the group.

The Magnetic Field

Not primarily impelled by artistic considerations, Fassbinder was not so much concerned to produce the best films he was capable of producing as to immerse himself in incessant pleasurable activity, surrounded by people he liked. The actress Margit Carstensen said that he was 'privately preoccupied with the people he chose to work with',[34] but it was often a matter of offering work to the people he wished to be privately preoccupied with, and in his early films, as in the plays he was directing with the antiteater, a great deal of his energy went into conveying an impression of being more knowing and experienced than he was. In his earliest attempts at directing, he never felt he could afford to admit that he had made a mistake. Michael Fengler has described how together they watched hundreds of films and went to an institute where they could experiment with a cutting machine and could try to analyse such films as Fellini's *8½*.[35] After drama school Fassbinder had tried to enrol at the newly founded German Academy for Film and Television in Berlin, but he was rejected. He had to teach himself how to make films by making them. In *The City Tramp* and *The Little Chaos* he used an almost static camera and very long takes, but in *Love Is Colder than Death* he was technically more ambitious, and by making eleven films in the two years 1969 and 1970, he taught himself all he needed to know. From the start he had been good at hiding his insecurity, and it had been advantageous to have so much rapport with Hanna Schygulla, though it did not extend beyond the work they did together. He was able to to build many of his productions around her, both in the theatre and in films.

Lommel immediately became aware of the extraordinary working relationship that Fassbinder had evolved with her. 'There's undoubtedly a great tension between the two of them. Already in rehearsal you notice that they understand each other almost wordlessly. It can happen that Fassbinder just looks into a book or looks out of the window, and Hanna already knows what he wants.' With the rest of the group, Fassbinder succeeded mainly because of his genius for generating erotic tension and for asserting himself aggressively. Lommel reports: 'Rainer solved a great deal simply through terror . . . This tension between the people in the group, it was like a drug.'[36]

In the theatre he was surrounded by actors of his own age, and his early films were cast on the same principle. Rather than look for older actors, he would remodel characters so that they could be played by the actors who were there. Even in his later films, though he often used older players, he sometimes reverted to his former principle. In his penultimate film, *Veronika Voss*, which was shot at the end of 1981, the central figure is a film actress at the end of her career, forgotten by the public that once adored her. The character was based largely on Sybille Schmitz, star of the thirties, who killed herself in 1955. But Fassbinder never intended to use an old actress in the part, which he first promised to Barbara Sukowa, his star in *Lola*,[37] and which he finally gave to Rosel Zech.

Childhood had left him with a driving fear of solitude. When he went abroad, he hardly ever went alone, and invariably made inordinate demands on the people who were with him, expecting them to manage with as little sleep as he did, and to be constantly available. In 1982 Dieter Schidor spent ten days with him in Cannes, where they stayed in different hotels. Fassbinder treated night as if it were day, and, worn out, Schidor insisted on having one early night. But at two o'clock in the morning, Fassbinder was hammering with his fists on the bedroom door. Schidor made up his mind not to give in, but the hammering went on, and people, roused from their slumber, were coming out of nearby rooms to see what was going on. 'Finally I opened the door, and he was standing there, and he looked at me with these incredible eyes, and he said: "You've got no idea what it's like to be alone. You don't know. You don't know anything. You don't know anything."'[38]

In some ways, the tormented Fassbinder would probably have liked to be a member of his own group in preference to being the leader of it. Like many leaders, he was partly motivated by a childhood insecurity about relating to the others on equal terms, and if the only choice was between being an

Fassbinder as the immigrant labourer, Jorgos, and Hanna Schygulla as Marie in the 1969 film *Katzelmacher*, based on Fassbinder's first play, which had been staged at the Action Theater in 1968.

outsider and being the leader, it was better to lead. The outsider not only had to put up with solitude, but to contend with the paranoid hostility of the group. This was one of Fassbinder's main themes in his early work. In both versions of *Katzelmacher* – the play was produced in April 1968 and the film was shot in August 1969 – he appeared as Jorgos, the Greek immigrant worker who arouses the jealousy and hostility of young people in the suburb, simply by his presence there. The implication of the derogatory word '*Katzelmacher*' is that the sexual behaviour of the immigrant worker is like that of a tom cat; Steve Gooch's translation is titled *Cock Artist*.[39]

'Actually this should have been a play about older people,' Fassbinder wrote in his prefatory note. 'But it was being staged at our antiteater. At the moment they are all young.' The play, which is written, like a screenplay, in short sequences, makes it clear from the outset – as does much of Fassbinder's work – that the tension must culminate in violence. The curiosity of the girls about Jorgos shows the boys that his presence constitutes a threat: he can displace them not only from a job but from a girl, and Fassbinder's summary of the plot reminds us of the way property relationships extend to sexuality in bourgeois society: 'Marie belongs to Erich, Paul goes to bed with Helga, Peter lives off Elisabeth, Rosy does it for money with Franz.' Reviewing a 1970 performance in *Theater Heute*, Volker Canaris wrote: 'The fable-like strategy of *Katzelmacher*'s plot demonstrates the interdependence of everyday fascism and petty bourgeois capitalism.'[40] In many of Fassbinder's scripts, fascist and racist attitudes are shown to be latent in the clichés that are exchanged in commonplace conversation when unexceptional characters are wiling away the time. Jorgos is little more than a catalyst, and in the film, which is set in a suburban block of flats, he does not make his first appearance till the action is well under way: the story is not so much about him as about aggressions, insecurities, frustrations and anomalies which are already present before he arrives. But Fassbinder brings these into focus by identifying with the outsider who will become a scapegoat.

Behind his criticism of contemporary society is the same neurotic drive that had helped him to dominate the Action Theater. His fear of being left an outsider heightened his sensitivity to the chemistry that hardens the solidarity of a group: instead of being released, sadistic aggressions are channelled into intolerant conversations, while in both sexual and social relationships, masochism encourages the viciousness that had taken political form in Nazism, which had organised sadism into uniformed thuggery.

Based on Fassbinder's intuitive understanding of these processes, *Katzelmacher* was itself an aggression against the audience that applauded it. Marieluise Fleisser, to whom the play was dedicated, compared his breakthrough to the movement of a lift: 'Suddenly he was in the lift, and he shot up above our heads. It was amazing how he did it.'[41] But there he still was, at the same time above the group's heads and at the head of the group. The film, which cost only 80,000 marks to make, won 650,000 marks in prizes. He could go on making films, and, two years later it brought him another 300,000 marks from the Film Subsidies Board.

In 1969, Fassbinder also wrote two original plays for the antiteater, *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now*, which tells the story of the Moors murderers, Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, and *Anarchy in Bavaria*. He also collaborated with Harry Baer on *Werewolf*, and adapted *The Burning Village* from Lope de Vega, as well as *The Coffee House* from Goldoni. Two of these five plays, *Werewolf* and *The Coffee House*, were co-directed by Fassbinder and Raben. Raben directed *Anarchy in Bavaria* single-handed, according to the credits, and Fassbinder directed *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now* and *The Burning Village*, in addition to directing four films. *Love Is Colder than Death* took him twenty-four days of shooting in April, *Katzelmacher* nine days in August, *Gods of the Plague* five weeks in October and November, *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* took thirteen days in December.

Earlier in the year Fassbinder had been invited by Kurt Hübner to direct a production in Bremen. This was his first opportunity to work in a municipal theatre, and, without consulting the group, he accepted immediately. The actors felt abandoned, but he arranged for Raben to co-direct with him, and the rapid flow of films – he could write screenplays with astonishing speed – enabled him to regroup the actors around him. For three of the four films, music was written by Raben, who had had musical training and was gradually being transformed by Fassbinder from an actor/director into a composer, while Kurt Raab became one of the principal actors, besides being Fassbinder's lover, personal assistant, production assistant and art director. After being his own art director in *Katzelmacher*, Fassbinder gave the job to Raab, who was both art director and production assistant on *Gods of the Plague*, and then art director on twenty-two subsequent films, television films and television series from *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* to *Bolwieser* (1976–7), even when he was playing a leading role, as he did in these two, and in *Satan's Brew* (1975–6), though in two of these three he was provided with an assistant.

Another prominent team-member, Harry Baer, played important parts in several early films including *Gods of the Plague* and *Wild Game* (1972), working as production assistant on seven films from *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* to *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) and again as one of three production assistants on *Veronika Voss* (1981) as well as being artistic associate on several projects from the fifteen-part television series *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1979–80) to Fassbinder's last film *Querelle* (1982).

Michael Fengler went on from acting in *The City Tramp* and working as cameraman on *The Little Chaos* to producing *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978). Hanna Schygulla acted in nineteen Fassbinder films, from *Love Is Colder than Death* to *Lili Marleen* (1980). Other names which recur again and again in his cast lists are Margit Carstensen, Irm Hermann, Ingrid Caven, Doris Mattes, Eva Mattes, Günther Kaufmann, Katrin Schaake, Ulli Lommel, Walter Sedlmayer, Karl Scheydt, Gisela Fackeldey, Gottfried John, Brigitta Mira, Adrian Hoven, Barbara Valentin, Günter Lamprecht, Hark Bohm, Karlheinz Böhm, Peter Chatel, Armin Meier, Volker Spengler, Marquard Bohm, Barbara Sukowa, Klaus Löwitsch, Ivan Desny, Elisabeth Trissenaar, Gerhard Zwerenz, Annemarie Düringer, Alexander Alleson, Isolde Barth, Karin Baal and Johanna Hofer.

1970 was an even more strenuous year for Fassbinder and the group than 1969: in the theatre the only production was a new adaptation by Fassbinder of Marieluise Fleisser's *Pioneers in Ingolstadt*, which was directed in Bremen by Raben during November, but the film version of it, which was made in December, was the group's seventh film in that year. The first, *Rio das Mortes*, had taken twenty days of shooting in January; the second, *The Coffee House*, Fassbinder's film version of his co-production with Raben for the stage, took only ten days. The third film, *Whity*, could have been shot in a Munich studio, but Günther Kaufmann, who was to play the lead, was always using his wife as an excuse for not being more available, and wanting to monopolise him for three weeks, Fassbinder took the group to Spain. The film was shot in Almeria during April, at a cost of 680,000 marks, whereas none of his previous films had cost more than 200,000 marks.

Living at close quarters in a small beach hotel with not much to do in the evening except drink, the members of the group were uncomfortably aware of each other and of Fassbinder's relationship with Kaufmann, who insisted on having a bedroom of his own. According to Kurt Raab, it was Kaufmann's habit of making promises and failing to keep them that drove Fassbinder into a suicidal depression: 'Fassbinder came into my room, demanded a razor, and locked himself into his room. Judging from what he said later, he had intended to cut his arteries, but had not done so because it had seemed to him more important to stay alive for us than to give Kaufmann the satisfaction of knowing it was on his account that he'd killed himself.'[42]

Hanna Schygulla, *left*, as Hanna in the 1970 film *Rio das Mortes*, and *right*, with Eddie Constantine as himself in the 1970 film *Beware of a Holy Whore*. In many of his early films, Fassbinder laconically named the characters after the actors.

But the crisis was not over. One morning Fassbinder invited Raab to accompany him on a trip to the coast. Driving fast in a Mercedes, Fassbinder asked him whether he knew how James Dean had died. 'He committed suicide,' Fassbinder explained. 'But he wanted to be in his favourite car. He drove quite fast through a junction, and at that moment a lorry came along.' Arriving at a cross-roads just as he arrived at that point in the story, Fassbinder did not stop. 'If a car had come then, I'd have died just like James Dean.' Raab was badly shaken. 'Yes, but Rainer, I'd have died too.'[43]

Fassbinder's moods reflected the state of his relationship with Kaufmann, and he did not try to pretend that he was relaxed. He would start the day by demanding ten glasses of rum and coca-cola: 'Fassbinder drank nine, one after the other; the tenth he usually threw at the cameraman, Michael Ballhaus.' This upset the Spanish crew, which was responsible to Ballhaus as technical director. As in Fassbinder's films, pressure was building up that would have, sooner or later, to be violently released. The moment came when he was sitting balefully on the terrace of a restaurant, angry that Kaufmann, who should have been there, still hadn't arrived. When the production secretary, a young, importunate, chatty lady approached Fassbinder unsuspectingly, she received a powerful blow on the leg. 'She yelled out in surprise and pain. That was the sign for the attack. Two tall, well upholstered stuntmen grabbed Fassbinder, dragged him to the middle of the terrace and gave him a sound thrashing, which he accepted without resisting. We all stood around watching with curiosity. None of us lifted a hand to help Fassbinder.' He picked himself up without saying anything. Nor did he afterwards make any reference to the incident.[44]

At least in conversation. He was going to use it was one of the climaxes in *Beware of a Holy Whore*, which was shot in Sorrento, but is set in a Spanish seaside hotel where a group of German actors and technicians is waiting restlessly for the director and the star. The star was played by Eddie Constantine, whom Fassbinder remembered from Hollywood films seen in childhood; the director was played by Lou Castel, wearing Fassbinder's leather jacket. The film they are to make is directed against 'state-sanctioned violence', but their own relationships erupt into violence when the group beats up the director. From Fassbinder's point of view, the violence was probably more or less in line with the violence in *Katzelmacher*: the leader is like the outsider in being liable to provoke paranoid hostility in the group.

According to Fassbinder *Beware of a Holy Whore* was 'specifically about the situation of trying to live and work as a group',[45] but the film, which starts with the motto 'Pride comes before a fall', ends with a quotation which suggests that he felt bitterly resentful of the way leadership excluded him from the group. 'I tell you I am often weary to death of portraying humanity without participating in what is human.' The sentence comes from Thomas Mann's story *Tonio Kröger*, which poses the question of whether the artist is generically different from other people. Tonio enjoys being admired as a painter, but he is convinced that a normal, healthy, decent human being never creates works of art. 'Warm, heartfelt emotion is invariably banal and futile; it is only the irritations and frigid ecstasies of the artist's corrupted nervous system that are artistic. The artist must be inhuman, extra-human; he must stand in a strange, aloof relationship to our humanity.' Fassbinder would possibly have preferred not to be an artist, but he knew that the film was ending the first phase in his attempt to use cinema in the way he had earlier used theatre – as a means of entering into a relationship with a group. At the beginning of 1971 he wound up the company Antiteater-X-Films.

In spite of himself he was improving as an artist, or at least as a craftsman. *Beware of a Holy Whore* shows great technical expertise; it also shows his awareness that the emotional detachment of the artist can be intrinsically

pleasurable. Jeff, the director in the film, can give cool, co-ordinated instructions to his cameraman while hysteria rages all round him.

The film is full of private jokes. Hanna Schygulla plays an actress called Hanna; the character of Irm was played by Magdalena Montezuma, an actress from Werner Schroeter's films, but *Beware of a Holy Whore* was post-synchronised, and Irm's voice was provided by Irm Hermann. There is even a certain jokiness in treating the theme of blood-sucking. 'I've told the story of a man who brings up his own group for himself. I've always said the others made me into the leader, whereas they say I was looking for followers. So I've simply tried to create a comedy about myself as seen from outside, a comedy about what I would be if I were like that and what I perhaps am, but don't believe I am.'[46] At the same time, the idea of prostitution may have been in his mind as an analogue: the director is the pimp who profits from the sexuality of his team.

But what Fassbinder had been tending to leave out of account was the audience. Looking back in 1974 on the phase of film-making that ended with *Beware of a Holy Whore*, he praised the films as showing 'that they were made by a person of great sensitivity, aggression and fear', but condemned them as being 'too elitist and two private, just made for myself and a few friends'.[47] It is easy, though, to exaggerate the extent to which he changed direction after *Beware of a Holy Whore*. He was right to say: 'This yearning for a group was something I carried around with me much longer than the others did. And really I wanted to find out from this film whether I still had it. I found out that in spite of everything I did.'[48]

The last theatrical production in which he used the name antiteater was the last production he co-directed with Peer Raben – *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, which was premièred in Nuremberg during March 1971 – but this does not mean that he gave up the idea of keeping a group of actors together for use both in theatre and cinema.

Bochum

In 1972 Peter Zadek, director of the theatre in Bochum, wanted to engage Fassbinder as a director, and he accepted on condition that he could take a company of actors with him. They were all put under three-year contracts, but not at the same salary. Hanna Schygulla, Ulli Lommel, Margit Carstensen and Kurt Raab were paid at the highest rate and Irm Hermann at the lowest – an arrangement to which Fassbinder agreed. They all lived together in a house on the outskirts of the town, but Fassbinder found it impossible to work in a theatre that was under the control of another director, and the mere fact of having signed a contract did not predispose him to carry out the commitments that it specified. During his first production, *Liliom* by Ferenc Molnár, he was already trying to extricate himself from his second, *Bibi* by Heinrich Mann. He pretended to be ill, tried to make Zadek believe he had left Bochum, and eventually staged a production in which little of Mann's text remained. Before leaving Bochum he acquired a dog, a boxer which he christened Zadek, taking pleasure in calling out the name when he was bringing it to heel. The unfortunate dog also had to serve as a scapegoat: identifying it with Peter Zadek, he maltreated it.[49]

Frankfurt

It looked as though Fassbinder would fare better when in the autumn of 1973 he was invited to take over the artistic direction of the Theater am Turm in Frankfurt; here there would be no clashes with another director. He enjoyed collecting a company together and promised that it would be run democratically, but autocratically announced that he would direct Zola's *Germinal* and Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, that Peter Chatel wanted to direct *Leonce and Lena*, and that Kurt Raab was to be director of the ensemble. He promised that all the actors would be involved in his films, and that the films would be made in Frankfurt. But he had acquired more self-confidence as a film director than he now had as a director in the theatre, and before he took up his appointment, he began to regret committing himself to it. In the spring of 1974 he staged Peter Handke's new play *The Unintelligent Ones Are Dying Out* at the Frankfurt Schauspielhaus but made only one appearance at the Theater am Turm during the run of the play, and he devoted little time to preparations for his first season at the theatre, leaving almost everything in the hands of the inexperienced administrator he had appointed, Eberhard Wagner, without even making himself available for consultation.[50] In theory he wanted a subsidised theatre in which he would work with the same freedom he had enjoyed in his antiteater, and in theory he wanted to give his company opportunities of acting on the stage again, but in practice he did not want to shoulder the responsibility of running a theatre.

Fassbinder in 1974.

He took up his appointment officially in August 1974 and threw himself enthusiastically into rehearsals for *Germinal*, using every actor in his company. They had fourteen days of rehearsal, but instead of creating a new feeling of ensemble, he alienated some actors with his rudeness, and did nothing to repair the split between the actors who had worked for years in subsidised theatres and the clique of associates who had worked in his films, acquiring little of the same professionalism. Most of these would have preferred to start work on a new film rather than discipline themselves to go on repeating the same performance in a theatre. Hostility between the two factions was inevitable, and Fassbinder did little to assuage it.

Fulfilling an old ambition, Fassbinder played Jean in Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, but he quarrelled viciously with the girl he picked as director, Ulla Stöckl, and he was prone to nervousness, which increased when the production was coolly received. He curtailed the performances, and, while directing *Uncle Vanya*, offered little help to the actors, coming late to rehearsals, sitting languidly in the auditorium with his feet on a table and refusing to rehearse monologues, telling the actors to work those out for themselves.

To those who knew Fassbinder well it was obvious that he was not going to stay in Frankfurt for long. Audiences were dwindling, the reputation of the theatre was deteriorating, Fassbinder was quarrelling with the management, scandals were being caused by drunkenness on stage and brawling in the auditorium. When the situation was at its worst, Fassbinder disappeared, taking Kurt Raab with him for a holiday in the Bahamas.[51]

Undeniably, his behaviour in Frankfurt was highly irresponsible, and it was characteristic that he would give so much leeway to his own moods and whims, making his decisions with little concern for the theatre or for the community that was financing it. His departure from Frankfurt was precipitated by a quarrel which was not entirely unwelcome to him. It had been his intention to stage his play *The Garbage, the City and Death*. It is a play about corruption, set in Frankfurt. The most beautiful of the prostitutes who wait for clients under a bridge, Roma B., is the daughter of a Nazi drag artist with a crippled wife. A character named The Rich Jew falls in love with her. He is an inordinately successful property speculator and, respecting her death-wish, he strangles her. Because the system of justice is corrupt, he can kill with impunity. It is not a play about Jewishness, but Fassbinder was accused of anti-semitism and the production was cancelled.

Hilmar Hoffmann, the Frankfurt Kulturdezernent, tried to form a triumvirate to run the theatre - Peer Raben, Peter Chatel and Gottfried John - but Fassbinder, throwing a big dinner party, succeeding in persuading nearly all his actors to give notice. Only Chatel and John wanted to stay.[52] After leaving Frankfurt, Fassbinder himself would direct only one more production on the stage - in September 1976 he produced *Women in New York*, an adaptation of Clare Booth Luce's *The Women*, in Hamburg, evolving an eye-catching performance which was to be preserved in the television film he made in 1977.

What is remarkable, though, is that temperamental qualities so inimical to continued work in the theatre were conducive to successful work in the cinema. Like the schoolboy who had refused to concentrate on any subject which left him unenthused, Fassbinder still had a very low threshold of boredom, and theatre depends on repetition, whereas in filming an effect needs to be created only once, provided that the camera is there to capture it. Fassbinder had tremendous energy but little self-discipline. In the cinema he could achieve results very quickly, shooting, as he did, with little rehearsal and only one or at most two takes of each sequence. One advantage of working continually with the same actors and technicians was that their familiarity with his methods speeded up the process of achieving results. In fourteen years of film-making, he relied almost exclusively on three cameramen, Dietrich Lohmann (1969-71), Michael Ballhaus (1972-8) and Xaver Schwarzenberger (1979-82), who were good at interpreting the detailed drawings he did at the beginning of each shooting day, indicating the composition of each shot, while the actors who gravitated to him mostly preferred to throw all their energy into a single take, rather than repeat a short sequence innumerable times. They were also performers who enjoyed being challenged in such a way that unconscious forces would come into play. If this was prostitution, it at least sucked the mind, as well as the voice and the body, into the performance. *Beware of a Holy Whore* showed how conscious he was of the way he exploited the storms of emotional energy he raised by enervating the actors and letting them rub against each other when their inhibitions were eroded and the normal barriers of politeness had broken down; far from abandoning this approach, he refined it. Sometimes he would shoot for sixteen hours in a day, but exhaustion was not always damaging to the emotional energy he wanted to release. As one of his collaborators put it, 'he drives people to the point of bringing something up from inside themselves, and he finishes with them when there's nothing left to suck out'.[53]

Like the Russian film director Vsevolod Pudovkin, who once got the gratified smile he needed from a boy, a bad actor, by telling him what a good actor he was,[54] Fassbinder, as a director, was possibly at his best when he was exerting his power as a manipulator of other people's moods. It may even have been true that Irm Hermann, as a film actress, was at her best after he had reduced her to tears. John Huston is said to have got the expression he wanted, on one occasion, from Lauren Bacall by twisting her arm.[55]

But Fassbinder could also work the opposite way. Though she had played Mieze in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Barbara Sukowa was inexperienced as a film actress when he cast her as the prostitute in *Lola*. She was scared of the role, and in one sequence he gave her confidence by sitting under a table and touching her legs. In some of the erotic sequences it was more advantageous to make her unaware of his presence by concealing himself behind the camera, which made it easier for her to imagine that she was alone with her partner in the scene. Generally she was happy to work with a single take, but in one important sequence he took a risk which to her seemed insane. To prepare herself for the striptease sequence, she had worked with a dancer, but she had been told that the stage in the set would be slanted. Arriving at the studio, she found that it was straight, and although she had to sing, dance, take her dress off, jump over a table and end up sitting on Mario Adorf's shoulders, it was all done without rehearsal in a single take.[43]

It was not merely over individual actors that Fassbinder exerted the force of his personality: he could enter into a quasi-intimate relationship with the whole film crew. Sometimes he would halt proceedings to have a beer brought to a thirsty electrician, and it was partly the unpredictability of his behaviour that made him so fascinating. Thomas Schühly, the producer of *Veronika Voss*, says: 'My whole crew were always in love with him and they would work for twenty-four hours ... When we started production, it was like an explosion for four or six weeks.'[56]

Fassbinder had a certain affinity with Antonin Artaud, who originated the idea for a Theatre of Cruelty. *Satan's Brew* (1975-6) was prefaced with a quotation from an Artaud poem:

> The difference
> between the pagans and us
> is that at the source
> of all their beliefs
> there is a tremendous effort
> not to think like men
> so as to keep in touch
> with the whole of creation
> which means the divine.

Long before he made his formulations for a Theatre of Cruelty, Artaud was advocating a directness of communication which had nothing to do with either consciousness or words. There should be 'a kind of magnetic intercommunication between the spirits of playwright and director'.[57] In his own way Fassbinder created a Theatre of Cruelty in his cinema, using, as a means to realise it, the non-verbal intercommunication he could achieve with a group of actors. Ulli Lommel, who played frequently in his films between 1969 and 1976, loved the 'communal magnetic field which we enter together and in which, under certain circumstances, something can occur which is more beautiful than life'. As a director, Artaud never succeeded in carrying out his own prescriptions: with actors he did not have the right touch. Fassbinder did, according to Lommel:

> I believe that Fassbinder provides an enormous impetus which does not necessarily come from his consciousness; there is such an uncommonly strong connection between the unconscious minds of the various people, and it operates so extraordinarily often. Perhaps a kind of magic is involved, somehow, to make it effective, and he comes across so seriously and very often a bit authoritatively, very often a bit like God the Father ... Personally I'm always a bit irritated when he gives proper directions, because it makes me think that perhaps he doesn't quite understand things himself, and is therefore verbalising them. Otherwise, when things are clear, there is such an extraordinary strong current, and such a powerful connection ...[58]

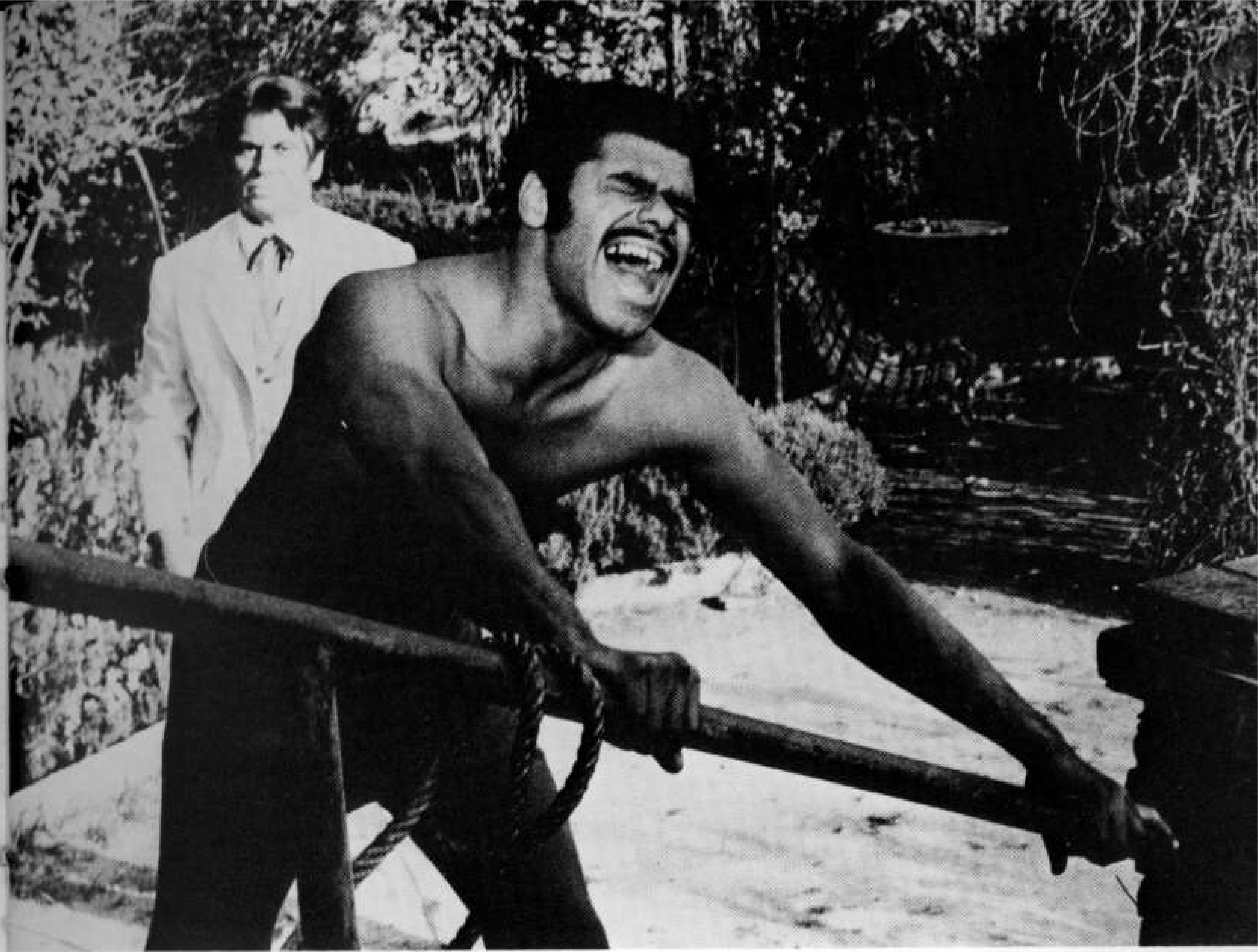
Lommel is a particularly valuable witness because he worked in films not only as an actor but as a director, using many of Fassbinder's actors and technicians, but failing to inspire in them the same devoted concentration. 'A certain laxity prevailed, everything was rather amusing; this feeling of following a leader blindly, this somnambulistic execution of certain technical things by the crew – all this was simply no longer there in the work on my film. But when I watch Rainer at work, something magical is on hand. Sequences that needn't have worked out well suddenly acquire tension and atmosphere. It's true that no one knows for sure where this is coming from, but it's clear that he is initiating it.'[59]

It is also clear that the tension and excitement he generated had something to do with the intensity of his need for other people to give his experience back to him. 'Everything I experience I have, somehow or other, also to rework, in order to have the feeling that I've experienced it.' This is not an uncommon need; what was uncommon was his ability to involve others in the process. He was a creative artist in the plural: the shared work that gave him excited insight into his own experience gave them excited insight into theirs. They were aware that he was constantly willing to take extreme risks, and even when he was putting on a show for them, a part of his deepest life was involved in it. Even when he abused them, or shocked them with a brutal assault on a defenceless member of the crew, he gave them the feeling that he was uncovering areas of human reality which normal politeness kept concealed.[60]

3 Paying for Love

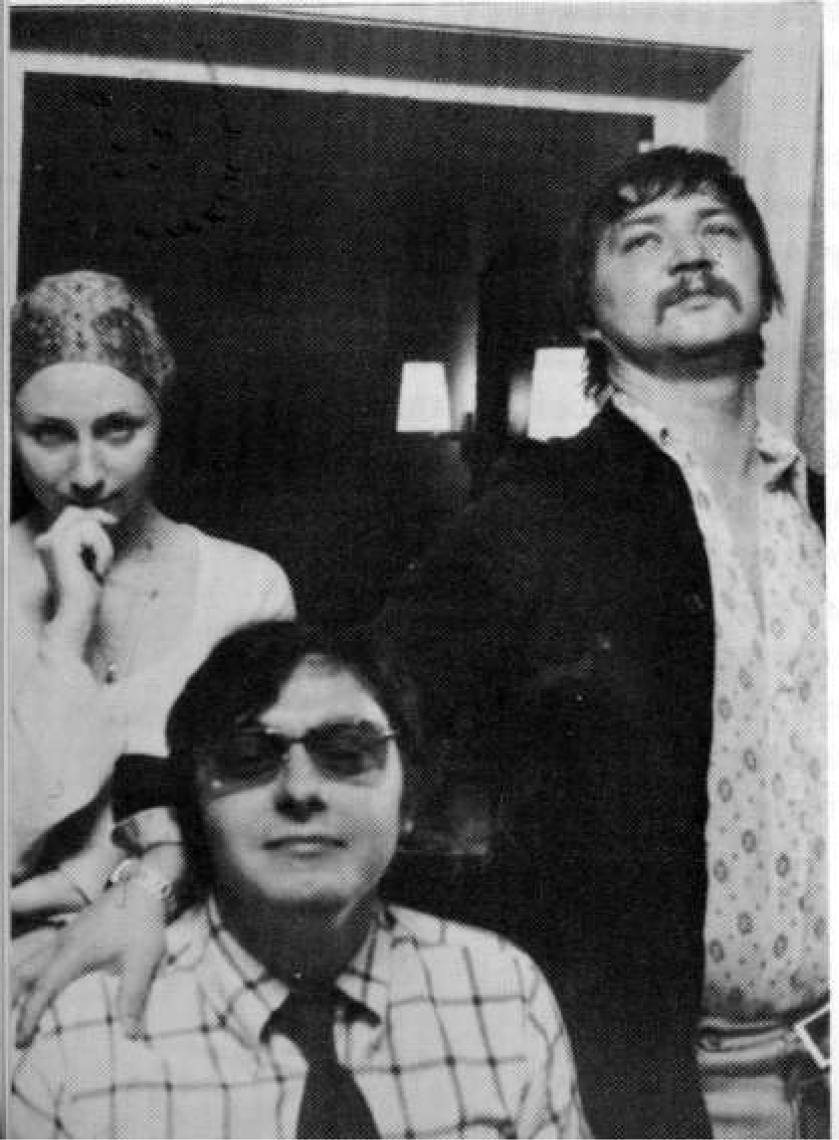
As soon as Petra von Kant meets Karin Thimm, the attractive young girl appeals to the divorced designer as someone who must be brought into the magnetic field. Karin has had no experience as a model, but Petra, who is highly successful, can afford the risk of offering her a job and making the offer almost irresistible:

Petra: Of course you don't simply go on the catwalk and do everything straight away. You'd have to be prepared to learn.
Karin: I'll learn. Sure. I don't want anything given to me on a plate.
Petra: Certainly I can make things easier for you. Later on, when you've had some training, you won't have to worry about finding a job.
Karin: Thanks.
Petra: Maybe at the beginning you'll have difficulties. I mean difficulties of a financial sort. While you're being trained, you won't earn anything.
Karin: Probably. I . . .
Petra: I'll help you. That's an offer. We won't fall out about that.
Karin: Yes. That's very nice of you.
Petra: You know, the good thing about this job is that you go all over the place. I love big foreign cities at night time. Do you like travelling?
Karin: Depends. Yes. I think so.
Petra: It can be wonderful. Travel, seeing things, having experiences. Foreign cities, music. Do you like art?
Karin: Art? I don't know.
Petra: Theatre, concerts, good films? No?
Karin: Yes. I quite like going to the movies. Films about love and so on. Romance. That's nice.
Petra: (uncertain): Yes? Well, we can learn together. There's so much that's there. I was lucky with my parents, you know. They got me interested in the good things in life when I was still very young.



Günther Kaufmann as Whity, the illegitimate half-caste son of the southern landowner Ben Nicholson (Ron Randell, left). *Whity* (1970) was one of the early films Fassbinder constructed around his love for the muscular black actor.

Some of the sentences and sentiments invert Fassbinder's attitude to his own experience, while others echo or even parody the blandishments he used to entice attractive young men into his orbit, and then to keep them in it. The chief inducement he had to offer was the prospect of stardom, and even before his films were commercially successful, this was powerful bait. In the 1969 and 1970 films many of the leading roles were given to Harry Baer, Kurt Raab and Günther Kaufmann. After Kaufmann had played the name part, a mulatto, in *Whity*, Fassbinder tried to consolidate their relationship by constructing a glamorous part for him in *The American Soldier*, which was to be filmed in Cinemascope, but after a week in Berlin, where the movie was to be made, prospects of happiness together were so poor that Fassbinder cancelled the production and left for Paris, where he always enjoyed the gay life in the saunas. Realising that he could spite Kaufmann by going ahead without



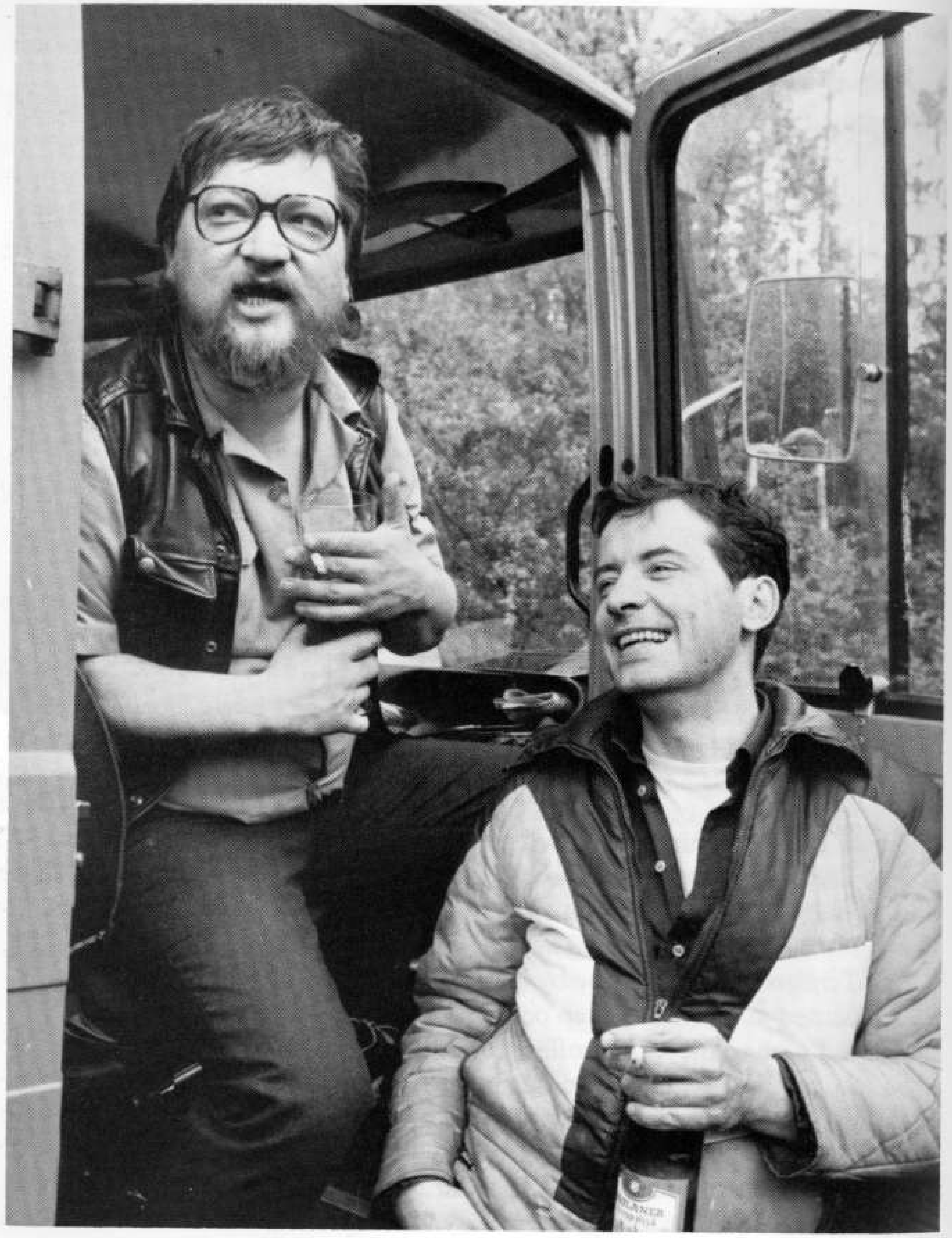
Above: Corporal punishment in *Satan's Brew* (1975–6). The nude prostitute Lana (Y Sa Lo) looks on while Walter Kranz (Kurt Raab) teaches his younger brother Ernst (Volker Spengler) that there is pleasure to be had from pain – if you inflict it.

Left: Fassbinder with Kurt Raab.

Fassbinder with Karl Scheydt (Ricky) while filming *The American Soldier.*

him,[1] he made the film on a low budget in Munich, without using Cinemascope. The part he had written for Kaufmann was given to Karl Scheydt, who had played the small part of a citizen in *The Nicklashausen Journey*. Kaufmann's only participation in *The American Soldier* was to sing the song 'So Much Tenderness' with music by Raben and a lyric by Fassbinder.

Concerned as he was to keep people dependent on him, Fassbinder had to be careful with money. If he offered too little, they became disaffected; if he gave too much, they might become independent, though generally, the combination of adventure and security he could offer was more important, as an enticement, than the money. When Harry Baer came back from a holiday in North Africa, Fassbinder tried to discourage him from taking off on his own again: 'So now you've had your holiday. That'll be enough for the next five years. Now there's work to be done. No more lazy stupid lying around in the sun. In September we're shooting in Sorrento anyway.'[2] Not only was Fassbinder offering financial security, adventure and travel, he was, like his Petra,



Fassbinder with his 'artistic collaborator' Harry Baer in the van they used for outdoor shooting, in the grounds of Bavaria Atelier Gesellschaft, while making *Lola* (May 1981).

implicitly offering to take quasi-parental responsibility: Harry, like Karin, was being invited to put himself into the hands of someone who would benevolently take all the important decisions for him.

One disadvantage in buying love by paternalism is that you offer freedom as part of the price, trusting the lover not to take advantage of the freedom. Harry Baer did sometimes take advantage, finding all kinds of unexpected opportunities. Some of the girls in the antiteater company were eager to have him as their lover, if only to make Fassbinder jealous.[3] In the play and the film, Karin wounds Petra deeply by describing a sexual adventure with a coloured man.

Karin: But we talked about it earlier, we always want to be honest with each other. But you can't bear it. You'd prefer me to tell lies.

Petra: Yes, lie to me. Please lie to me.

Karin: All right, it's not true. I was out walking by myself all night and thinking about us.

Petra: Yes? (Hopefully) That's not true?

Karin: Of course not. I slept with a man. It doesn't matter all that much, or does it?

Petra (weeping): No. No - of course not. But I don't understand it, really, I don't understand it. Why ... why ...

Karin: Do stop crying, Petra, please. Look, I do like you, I do love you ... but ... (She shrugs her shoulders. Petra weeps unrestrainedly) Look, it was obvious, I'll always want to sleep with a man. That's how it is with me. It makes no difference to us. A man like that I just use. Really, there's no more to it than that. A bit of fun. That's all. To begin with you were always talking about freedom and all that. You always said we're not committing ourselves to anything, neither of us. Stop crying, look, I do always come back to you.

Some of Fassbinder's friends say that every sentence in the play is likely to have been spoken either by him or to him. It was probably because of Günther Kaufmann that Karin is made to talk about sleeping with a coloured man, and eventually, because Kaufmann was always talking about loyalty to his wife, Karin will leave to rejoin her husband.

Fassbinder could never be sure about his lovers' motivation for staying with him:

Petra: You make me ill. Because I never know the real reason you're with me – because I've got money or give you a chance or because ... because you love me.

Karin: Well obviously, because I love you. Shit.

Petra: Oh, that's enough. No one can put up with so much uncertainty for very long.

Karin: If you don't believe me, then ...

Petra: What does believe mean? It's got nothing to do with believing. Of course I believe you love me. Obviously. But I can't know. I really don't know. That makes me ill. That's what it is.

The conversation is interrupted by Marlene, who brings a newspaper which contains a report on Petra's winter collection, together with a photograph of Karin, which pleases her inordinately. She has never before seen a picture of herself in a newspaper. She embraces Petra, kisses her, tells her that she loves her, which, far from providing the reassurance that Karin intends, nourishes her fear that she is ministering to Karin's narcissism.

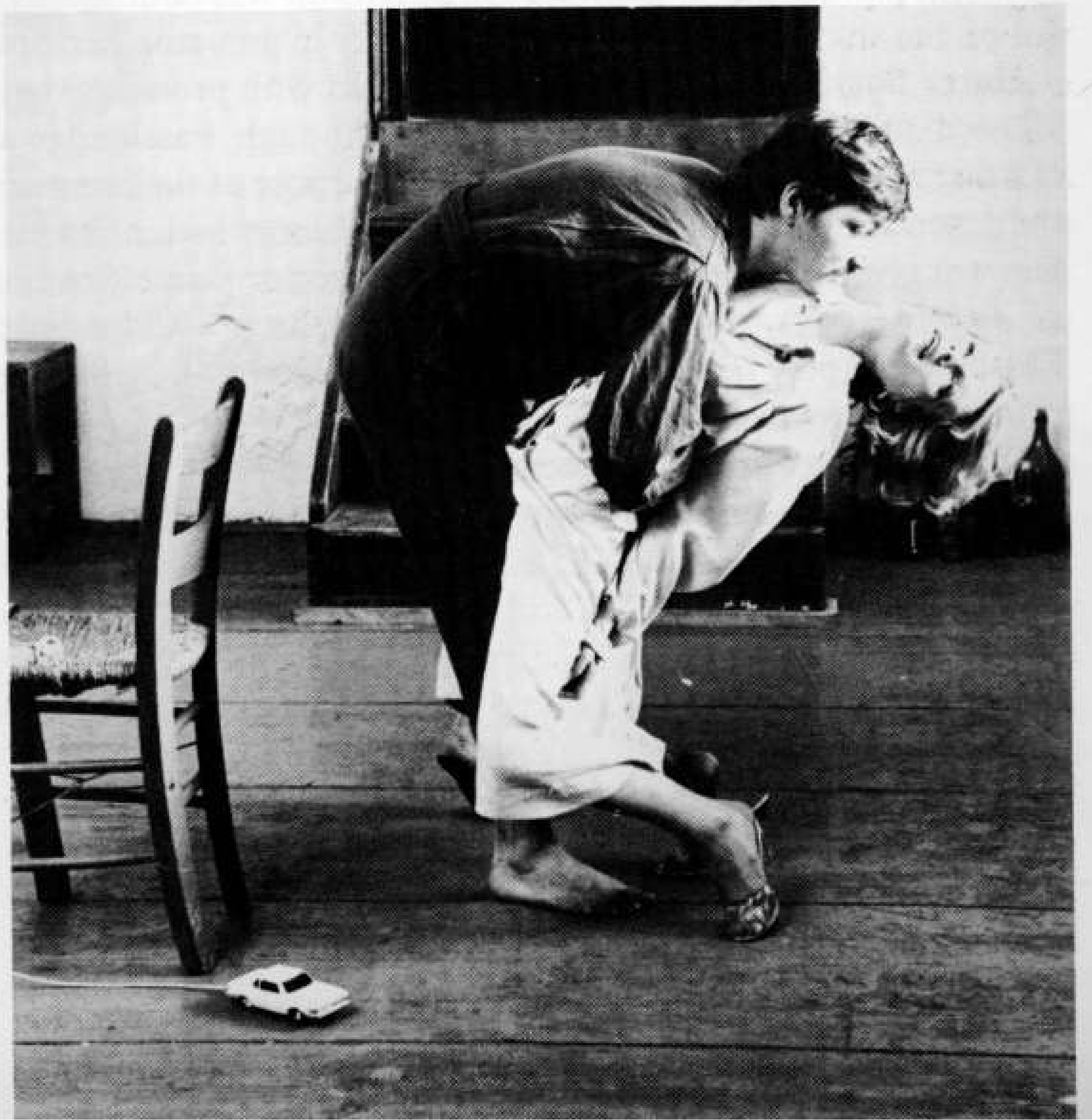
The parallel with Fassbinder's anxieties is almost uncomfortably close. The profession of actor, like the profession of mannequin, is gratifying to exhibitionist tendencies, while the director, like the fashion designer, is helping people to dangle their good looks in front of a public that has no chance to respond positively except by applause. Fassbinder, like Petra, was encouraging his protégés to show off in front of a bigger audience than they had ever had before, but however grateful they were for the opportunities, it was love, not gratitude, that he wanted.

Lite Peter, the boy in *I Only Want You to Love Me*, Fassbinder was constantly falling into the trap of giving a great deal to the people he loved, while demanding they should love him not for his gifts but for himself. In films he could underline the illogicality of what he was doing, but in practice he could not stop himself from following one gift with another, however absurd it was to expect that Lamborghinis would make Günther Kaufmann more affectionate. But Fassbinder was also less simple-minded and more self-aware than Peter in *I Only Want You to Love Me*: his generosity had a savage backlash. He wooed Kaufmann by offering him attractive roles, but they were not roles he could play without accepting humiliation together with the gratification. In the 1969 film *Gods of the Plague* he had to play a half-caste called Günther and nicknamed Gorilla. Günther claims to be a Bavarian, but his father was an American soldier. The creation of the character was in line with the jokes Fassbinder so often made at Kaufmann's expense, calling him a 'Bavarian nigger' and saying: 'Günther thinks Bavarian, feels Bavarian and talks Bavarian. That's why he gets a shock every morning when he looks in the mirror.'[4] Teasing like this is sadistic, but the aggression also functioned defensively. Unable to pull himself back from giving too much, Fassbinder preserved some kind of balance by giving what was unacceptable alongside what was acceptable.

At the same time he found ingenious ways of wooing Kaufmann through film. In *Gods of the Plague* Franz (played by Harry Baer) has an emotional reunion with Günther – the two men embrace passionately – and an expensive helicopter shot was introduced to celebrate Franz's declaration of love. Most of the film was shot in the first set Fassbinder had constructed for him in a studio, and many sequences are uncomfortably dark, but the helicopter swings the camera into a happy view of sunlit countryside. But then, as if this sequence had been an over-generous present, Kaufmann was punished by being made to creep away, half-naked, from the final shootout, and die after staggering up against a shop-window featuring a display of bridal fashions – another private allusion to Kaufmann's wife.

While some of the generosity towards Kaufmann involved aggression against him, much of it involved aggression against other people. The prin-

Ingrid Caven held captive by Fassbinder in *Shadow of Angels* (1975).



cipal victim here was Ingrid Caven, who of all the women in Fassbinder's life was the one he most respected, mainly because she could stand up to him better than any of the others. But when he married her in 1971, his motives appear to have been mixed, the negative ones outweighing the positive ones. It seems that he wanted to make Irm Hermann suffer at the same time as showing Kaufmann that he too could have a wife. Kaufmann acted as witness at the registry office wedding, and, according to Kurt Raab, spent the night in Fassbinder's room. Caven suffered in several ways. As the director's wife, she was not allowed to work - Fassbinder had not, after all, cast aside all bourgeois pretensions to gentility. Their relationship improved in 1971 as soon as they were divorced, but as his favourite lady she was the one most likely to be sacrificed when he wanted to show off in front of a boyfriend. She was victimised most viciously of all when Fassbinder was trying to please Kaufmann's successor, El Hedi Ben Mohammed Salem. In 1972, while they were working in Bochum, they were all swimming naked - at Fassbinder's instigation - in a pool, when Fassbinder told Salem to fetch a long kitchen-knife. Amid shouting and laughter from the others and screaming from Caven, two of the boys held her while Salem, carrying out Fassbinder's orders, tried to cut off her long hair. Afterwards she had to go around with part of her scalp bald and with knife wounds on her throat and arms.[5] Simultaneously Fassbinder was trying to impress Salem and the group. What he did in private life to generate erotic tension was continuous with what he did on the studio floor - a theatre of cruelty in non-stop performance.

Harry Baer, like Kurt Raab, was courted with promises that he would be allowed to direct films of his own, but though Fassbinder seemed to be offering a prospect of independence, the purpose of the promises was to keep the dependents dependent. The money Fassbinder had raised for Kurt Raab's film was given to another lover, the Swiss director Daniel Schmid, for *Shadow of Angels* (1975) for which Schmid had written a script based closely on Fassbinder's play *The Garbage, the City and Death*; with Baer Fassbinder continually procrastinated.

Though not entirely unsuccessful in his attempts to buy Kaufmann's love by advancing his career and giving him expensive presents, Fassbinder was not entirely successful; with Salem he fared better because he was providing the Moroccan with a new life and, effectively, a new identity. Fassbinder was also committing himself in a new way when he brought Salem from Paris at the end of 1971 to Bremen, where the group was on the point of going into production with *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*. At the age of twenty-six, Fassbinder had decided it was time to settle down into a permanent

Left: Fassbinder and Ingrid Caven in *Shadow of Angels* (1975), directed by Daniel Schmid.

Below: Fassbinder and Adrian Hoven in *Shadow of Angels*.

Extramarital love. Ali goes back, briefly, to Barbara, in *Fear Eats the Soul.*

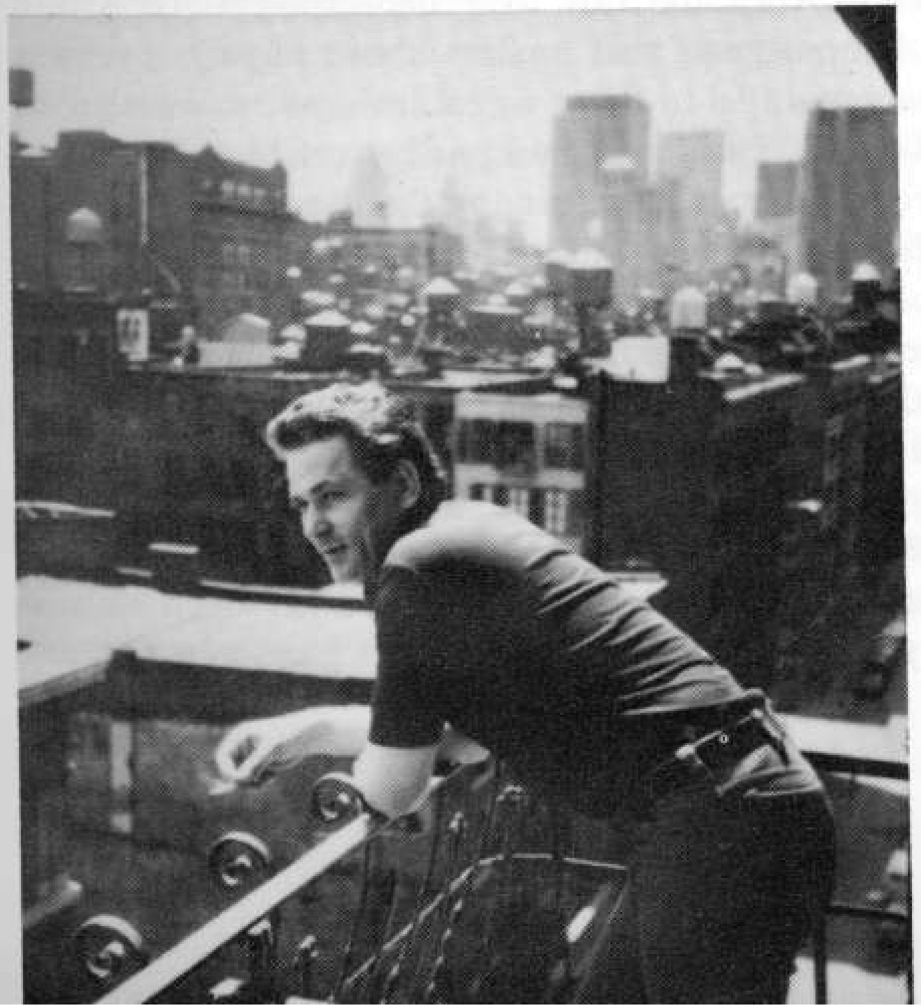
relationship with a man: he had made up his mind in Paris that they would live together in Germany. Salem did not have the striking muscularity of Kaufmann, but with his dark eyes, his full curly beard, his Berber pride and his erect stance, he was an impressive figure, and Fassbinder was soon to use him as an actor. In *The Merchant of the Four Seasons* Salem is seen as the Arab torturer in the flogging flashback. Having been relegated to the edge of Kaufmann's life, Fassbinder was at the centre of Salem's, his constant companion, the man who went on holiday with him, even if Irm went with them, as she did to Senegal in 1973. But the holiday was only part of a bigger present to Salem: Fassbinder was giving him a new life, with much more luxury and stability in it than he had previously had.

Just how much Fassbinder had been giving Salem became painfully apparent when the flow of generosity dried up. When the film *Fear Eats the Soul* was made in September 1973, Salem did not know that the male leading part was to be the final gift. Unaware that Fassbinder was in the process of extricating himself from their two-year-old relationship, Salem found a flat in Berlin, where Fassbinder was to direct *Hedda Gabler* at the Volksbühne, but Fassbinder never moved into the flat; he stayed with the owner of a bar frequented by prostitutes or in hotel rooms, while trying to keep Salem in ignorance both of where he was sleeping and where he was rehearsing. It was easy for Salem to find out that they were rehearsing in the theatre, but he waited in vain for Fassbinder to join him in the canteen.

Immediately after the première Fassbinder left Berlin, but day after day Salem went on sitting for hours in the canteen of the Volksbühne, brooding about revenge. He took Raab into his confidence, leading him into a corner and showing him the sharp kitchen knife he had taken to carrying about. 'I kill somebody; then newspapers all write about it, and Rainer is finished.' He did not immediately fulfil this threat, but when the actors were on tour with Fassbinder's play *Bremen Coffee*, the news reached them that Salem had stabbed three men with the kitchen knife, wounding one of them seriously. He escaped to Paris, but with the police on his trail.

He kept on the move between France, Belgium and Holland. From time to time he would try to contact Fassbinder by telephone, and once, when he was desperate for money, Raab was enlisted to ask Fassbinder whether he would help, but he refused. Subsequently various rumours reached the group about Salem's life, and eventually it was discovered that in Nîmes, where he had been in prison, he had hanged himself in his cell.[6]

At the beginning of his relationship with his next love, Armin Meier,



Armin Meier in New York, 1978: the last photograph taken of him before he committed suicide.

Fassbinder was excited, passionate and devoted, but his ardour abated as soon as he began to feel secure in the new situation. Armin was a good-looking young German who owed his existence to one of Hitler's experiments in eugenics. Armin's parents had come together in 1945 during the Action Lebensborn, in which fine specimens of Nordic manhood and womanhood were herded together by the Nazis and encouraged to procreate patriotically.[7] When Fassbinder met Armin he was working during the day as a butcher and had a room in the Deutsche Eiche, a bar, where he was helping out in the evenings whenever he was needed. After Fassbinder took over the Theater am Turm in Frankfurt, he was in a position to offer Armin a better job as manager of the cafe, and they shared a flat there with Ursula Strätz. Armin was illiterate. His mother had given him to a Catholic orphanage, where he had grown up. When he was fifteen, a Regensburg doctor or dentist had taken possession of him, using him as gardener, housekeeper and sleeping partner. The man had kept him illiterate, but had arranged for him to be trained as a butcher.

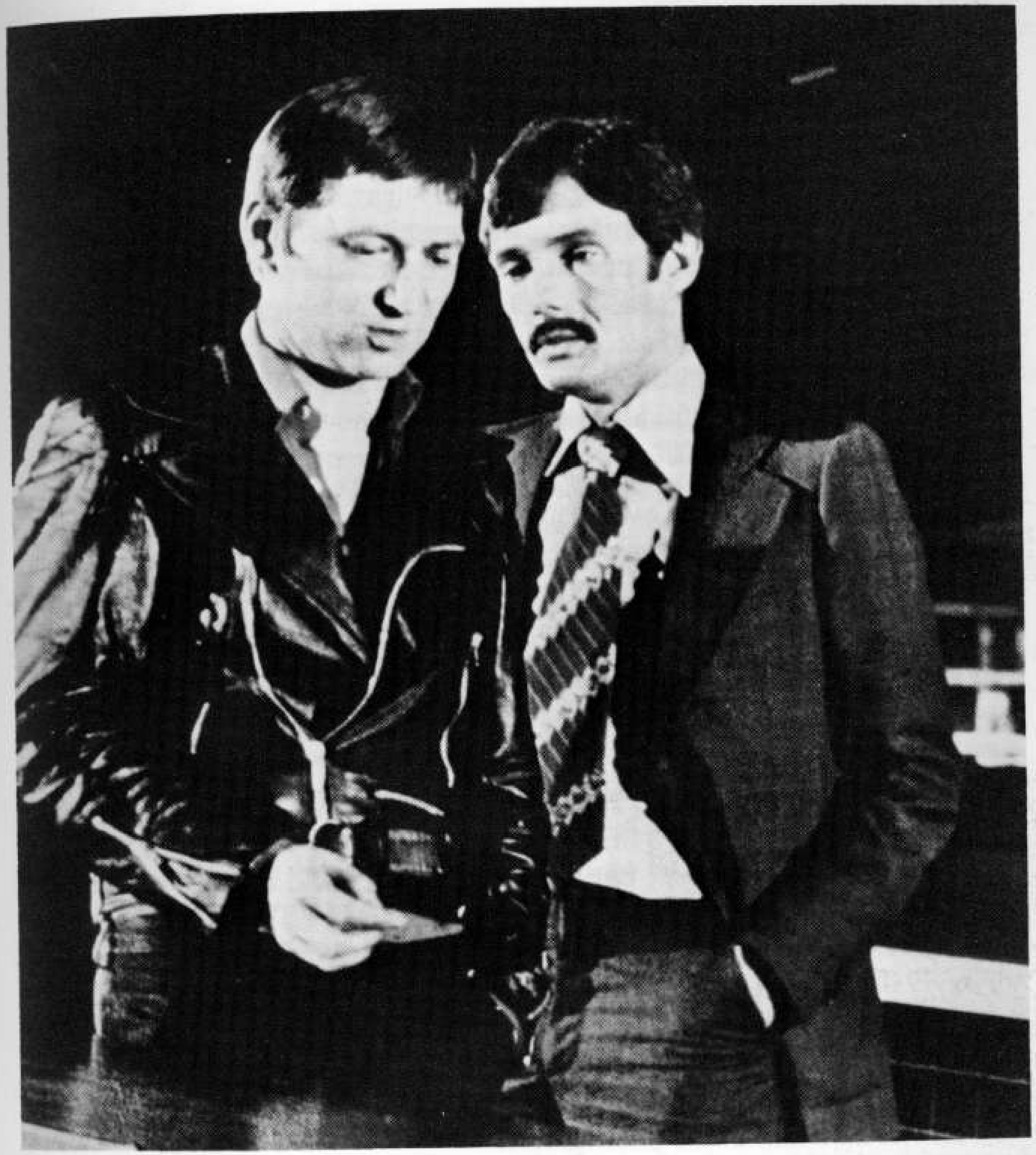
He was in dire need of someone to take care of him in a responsible way. Fassbinder succeeded for a time in making him happy, but if Armin had missed out on education, Fassbinder was not the man to see this as a lack that ought to be remedied. He listened to pop music with Armin, took him to casinos and amusement arcades, gave him money to play with one-arm bandits, bought clothes for him, took him to restaurants, took him, together with Raab, to visit the gay scene in San Francisco and Los Angeles.[8]

Fassbinder had misgivings about the relationship, but instead of using them as a basis for improving it, he worked them into *Fox*, the film he made in Marrakesh and Munich in April and July 1974, dedicating it 'To Armin and all the others'. The film suggests that anxiety about buying love was overlapping with an anxiety, parallel to Petra von Kant's, about whether he was being loved for his own sake. The film derives partly from his relationship with Armin and partly from a story told to him by the bar-owner who had accommodated him in Berlin when he was trying to avoid Salem. After winning a large amount of money from lotto, the bar-owner had allowed his lover to talk him into investing more and more of it in a paper factory which was foundering so badly that he was soon reduced to earning his living in the bar. In the film Fassbinder chose to play the working-class part he identified with Armin, Fox, casting Peter Chatel as Eugen, the middle-class character he identified with himself; but by introducing the lotto-winnings and the factory into the story, he reversed the real-life situation in which he was financing an uneducated young man. Fox, when we meet him, seems almost a latter-day equivalent of Rousseau's noble savage, unspoiled, with, apparently, a great potential for happiness. But he will be dead at the end of the film, after a brief period of taking drugs and feeling depressed. After trustingly investing his money in the ailing paper factory that belongs to Eugen's father, he is unable to understand his lover's perfidy. Finally he kills himself with an overdose: Fassbinder was accurately anticipating the suicide Armin had not yet committed.

The film, which was made about eighteen months before *I Only Want You to Love Me*, uses the same technique of causing anxiety to the audience by showing a relentless progression of reckless spending in an attempt to buy love. Fox, who must have been partly modelled on Armin, is by no means a weakling. He has energy, charm, courage, resourcefulness and a cheerful impertinence. The relationship with Eugen begins in a scene which shows how the initial antipathy between rich young man and fairground worker changes into affection as they exchange insults while Eugen is giving Fox a lift in his car:

> *Fox:* I think you're filthy.
> *Eugen:* Oh yes?
> *Fox:* Yes, I think so.
> *Eugen:* And you? Do you wash often?
> *Fox:* There are people who wash, and others who are clean.
> *Eugen:* And then there are people who stink even when they're clean.
> *Fox:* And that's the way you like it. Because there are those who like a bit of a stink. Isn't that so?
> *Eugen:* Don't look at me.
> *Fox:* Yes, I know. I stink of Brut (mispronouncing it) for Men.
> *Eugen:* Brut, my darling?
> *Fox:* Brut. Be careful, or cleverness like that will make me wet my pants.
> *Eugen:* I'll stop if you want to get out.
> *Fox:* Nope. I'm just beginning to get used to being with a girl like you.
> *Eugen:* Have you done it with Uncle Max?
> *Fox:* It's no use if you don't work at it.

Despite hints that the mutual antagonism may not be quite what it seems, we are not expecting them to become lovers within minutes of arriving at Eugen's flat. After asking where the bedroom is, Fox bounces on the bed; what upsets Eugen is that Fox still has his shoes on. While they are having a drink, Fox enquires whether Eugen snores.



Opposite Above: Fairground scene at the beginning of *Fox* (1974). When their boss is arrested for tax evasion, Madame Cherie (Irm Hermann) and Fox, the Talking Head, are suddenly jobless.

Opposite Below: Reflections in a gay boutique. Eugen (Peter Chatel, right) has brought his new lover, Fox, to buy fashionable gear at a boutique owned by his former lover, Klaus (Karl Scheydt).

Above: Fox (Fassbinder) and Eugen (Peter Chatel), as their relationship is breaking up.

Eugen: What did you say?

Fox: Well: you never know. It happens in the best of circles. Have you grown roots?

Eugen: What do you mean?

Fox: Well why don't you sit down?

Eugen sits.

Oh pour me another drink, will you?

Eugen gets up.

By the way, if there's a stink, it's me, I've taken my shoes off. They're new, you see, they still feel a bit tight.

Eugen: Perhaps your trousers do too.

Fox: Yes, well they do, actually.

This is the cue for undressing, and the sequence has generated such a strong tension that the dialogue could equally well have developed into violence, though we are quite prepared to believe that the tension will be released sexually. In fact the love-making is pointedly delayed by actions and dialogue which serve as reminders of the class barrier between the lovers. Eugen's bourgeois education has instilled habits of fussy orderliness:

Eugen: (picking up Fox's clothes from the floor) I'm just tidying up your things, darling.

Fox: What a stupid cow. Do you know the story? There was a man on the motorway in California, and his car had broken down, and he waved and waved, but nobody stopped. And after nine hours he shot himself. That's what happened.

Eugen: Do you always throw your things about all over the place?

Fox: Some people keep their wardrobe tidy, others care more about what's inside their head. Should I wash, or would you like me in a natural state?

Eugen: Mmmhhh.

Fox: Who's that in the photograph?

Eugen: My father.

Fox: Rather nice. I might like him.

Eugen: My father?

Fox: To you he's Daddy. To me he's just a man.

Eugen: I don't think he'd be interested.

Fox: There's no-one who can't be had.

In this sequence, as in the film as a whole, it seems to have been a combination of instinct and personal experience that was enabling Fassbinder to contrive a subtle balance of sympathy between two characters who appear to be talking and behaving in an unsubtle way. Fox, like Fassbinder, is captivatingly unpredictable, provocative, alternating between friendliness and coarseness, tenderness and aggressiveness. He loses the initiative only when Eugen falls back on behaviour which is more conventional than spontaneous, and during negotiations over investing in the paper factory. The question Fassbinder leaves unanswered is whether Eugen is attracted more by Fox's money than by his personality, or whether the balance shifts as the relationship develops.

Fassbinder must have been attracted by everything in Armin that seemed unspoiled, and he may sometimes have caught himself out trying to impose on his lover habits, manners, attitudes, which he disliked, but which had been imposed on him too strongly for him to reject them. The idea that a film director's wife should not work cannot have been the only bourgeois prejudice to have become ingrained in his thinking, but whereas Fox has a stronger personality than Eugen, Armin was living at close quarters with a man who had built his private and professional life around his ability to dominate. Cooking for Fassbinder, waiting on him in the flat and tidying up after him, Armin was consciously adapting himself to Fassbinder's lifestyle and unconsciously picking up habits, mannerisms, intonations and turns of phrase which were characteristic of Fassbinder. Some of their friends noticed this in Armin, and it was inevitable that Fassbinder would find it irritating and wearisome. In both Kaufmann and Salem he had responded to what was natural, uncouth, primitive; Armin looked like James Dean – or so Fassbinder thought – but he behaved like a parrot.

In the film Fox is so loving that it is easy for Eugen to prise money away from him for the floundering factory and for a flat they will share. Though it belongs to Fox, he will make it over to Eugen when collateral is needed for a bank loan, believing, wrongly, that he can trust his lover to give it back later. This imbalance between giver and manipulator occurs again and again in Fassbinder's films. Petra loves and Karin manipulates; Martha loves and Helmut manipulates; Bolwieser loves and Hanni manipulates; Maria Braun's infidelity is secondary to her love: the betrayal comes from her husband who makes an arrangement behind her back with her boss, who is also her lover; in *In a Year with 13 Moons* Erwin loves Anton Saitz enough to have his sex changed, while Anton, who is a professional manipulator, a speculator, is almost totally indifferent; in *Lili Marleen* Wilkie is genuinely in love with Robert and lets herself be manipulated into smuggling out of Poland a film about the concentration camps, but at the end of the war she finds Robert has married a Jewish girl.

One of the reasons Fassbinder could balance sympathy so well between manipulator and loving victim is that he found both tendencies in himself. At the beginning he seems to have loved Armin as much as he had ever loved Kaufmann or Salem, but none of the three had strength or determination comparable with Ingrid Caven's, while Fassbinder, like Anton Saitz, was a professional manipulator. Saitz is said to own brothels which are organised like concentration camps; this may be a cryptic allusion to the way Fassbinder manipulated the emotional reactions and interactions of other people. Though he had not always had the upper hand with Kaufmann, he could not help having it for most of the time with Salem and Armin. Not all the time. He liked to provoke quarrels with his lovers, as he did with his actors, believing, as he did, that people let their full personality come into play when they lost their temper. The episode he contributed to the film *Germany in Autumn* offers a series of frank insights into Fassbinder's private life. There is no story, no characters. We simply see Fassbinder with his mother and with Armin. The domestic life they share is turbulent. Fassbinder treats Armin like a servant, ignores him during protracted telephone conversations, indulges all his own needs without consideration for his lover's.

Scared that the flat may be raided by the police, Fassbinder flushes cocaine down the lavatory. Armin is goaded into making remarks which provoke bitter onslaughts from Fassbinder, who calls him a Fascist and kicks him out of the flat, only to start shouting desperately, within minutes, for him to come back. Amiably unperturbed, Armin then puts an affectionate arm around Fassbinder's shoulders. 'Is Bully upset?' Sulkily Fassbinder rebuffs the advance and stalks off to his room. The film was made as a response by nine directors to the depression that ensued in the Federal Republic in 1977 after the successful storming of a highjacked Lufthansa jet at Mogadishu, the mysterious deaths in a high-security prison at Stammheim of three leaders of the Baader-Meinhoff gang and the discovery at Mulhouse of Hanns-Martin Schleyer's corpse. The leader of an employers' organisation, he had been kidnapped. Fassbinder's episode in the film may have been modelled on Jean-Luc Godard's highly personal contribution to the 1967 film *Far from Vietnam*, but Fassbinder willingly gives away far more about his private life.

He seems to have disliked the convention of privacy as much as he disliked the kind of superficial considerateness that is guaranteed by bourgeois politeness, and *Fox* provides plentiful examples of the style in domesticity that Fassbinder hated. During a meal they share with Eugen's parents, Fox is offered a handkerchief when he keeps sniffing, screwing up his nose, and is told off for helping himself to a knob of sugar without using the tongs. Later on he is commanded to wear slippers in his own flat because his houseproud lover does not want mud on the valuable carpets, and Fox is reminded where the ashtray is.

Fassbinder at table with his mother in the improvised sequence in *Germany in Autumn* (1977–8). He provokes her into making some extremely reactionary statements.

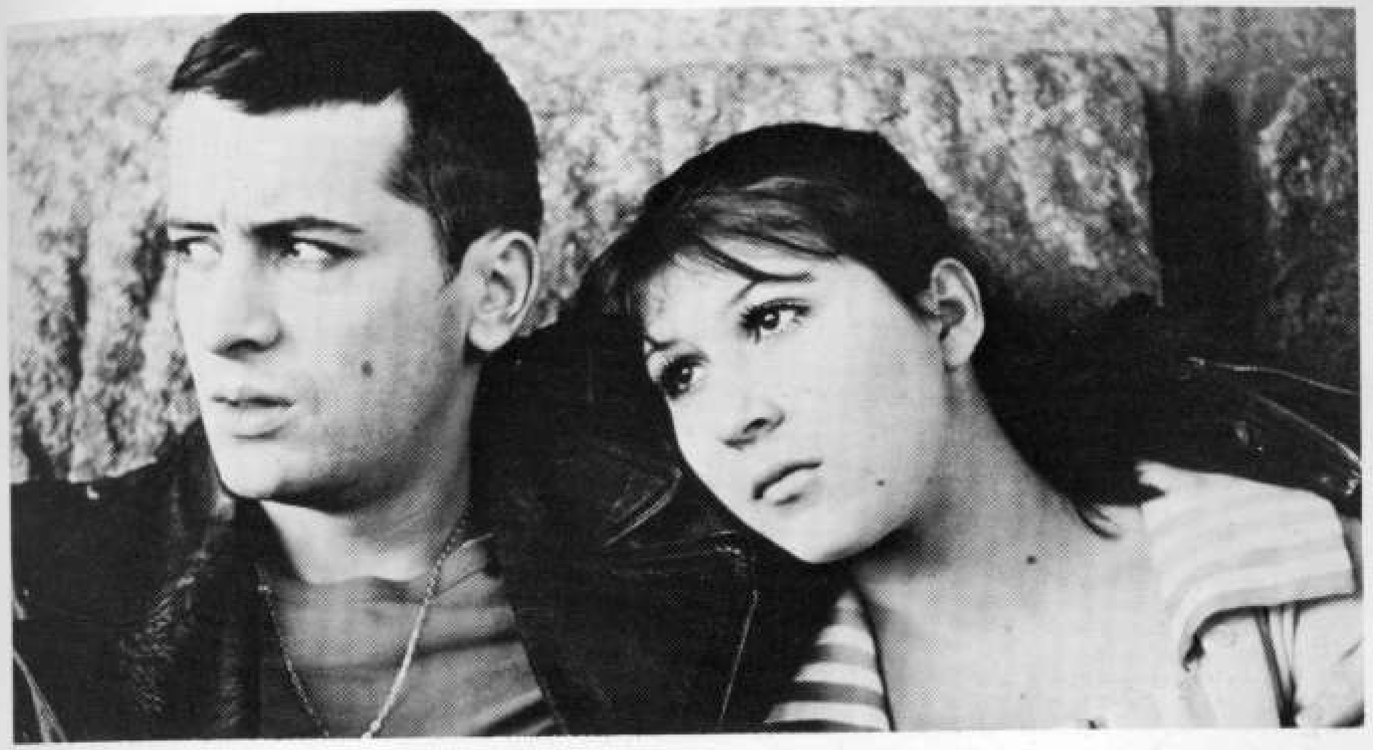
It is clear from *Germany in Autumn* that Fassbinder's domestic habits must have been a strain on anyone who tried to live with him and keep house for him, but Armin did not always suffer passively; sometimes he was roused to destructive fury. Once, according to Harry Baer, on the first day of shooting, Armin stole a script with Fassbinder's drawings of frame compositions in it. On the whole, though, Fassbinder would possibly have preferred more resistance on the domestic front. Habitually he tested not only actors but friends by seeing how far they would let him go; but before he finally broke with

Armin, Fassbinder was losing control over himself, as drugs and powerful sleeping tablets made deep inroads into his life. He was often taking three grammes of cocaine, which was costing him 250 marks a gramme. He was liable to go to sleep in the bath or on the kitchen floor. He said he was enjoying Armin's company only when they were both under the influence of LSD. They quarrelled furiously, and Armin was locked out of the flat for a week; Fassbinder kept the key in the lock from the inside.[9] At the beginning of 1978, when he was in Coburg, filming *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, he wrecked a hotel room so badly that the producer, Michael Fengler, was sent a bill for 20,000 marks, together with photographs of the damage. Sometimes Fassbinder failed to turn up for the shooting.

Armin's last holiday was in New York, where Fassbinder began a new affair, once again choosing a coloured lover. Furious, Armin came back to Munich alone. Fassbinder wrote to tell him their relationship was over, but he was at a loss to understand the letter; pathetically he went around showing it to friends. Raab believes that Fassbinder had perversely made the letter too complicated for Armin to understand. In May Fassbinder took his coloured lover to Cannes for the première of *Despair* at the festival. Armin was saying that he would go to Cannes, and Fassbinder was instructing his friends they must do everything to stop him from going. He did not go, but on Fassbinder's birthday, 31 May, he went into the kitchen of the flat and swallowed an overdose of pills. About five days later the housekeeper complained of the smell that was coming from the flat. When Fassbinder's mother, who had a key, came to investigate, she saw an arm on the floor, sticking out from the kitchen. Fassbinder did not attend the funeral.[10]

The memorial film for Salem had been made with him in it, before he knew the relationship was ending; the memorial film for Armin was posthumous, with Volker Spengler in the role of the transvestite. 'There was an existential need,' Fassbinder said, 'for me to do something.'[11] As usual he worked rapidly on the script, and shooting began in July. This time Fassbinder took responsibility not only for script, direction and editing, but acted as his own art director and his own cameraman.

The operation Erwin has undergone in Casablanca, transforming him into Elvira, is Fassbinder's most extreme example of an attempt to buy love, and the film is, above all, a film about loneliness. It was here that Fassbinder could most readily identify with his dead friend. During the last five days in the life of Elvira Weiskopf, we see her roaming through the inhospitable city, trying to make human contact. In the pre-title sequence she is beaten up after an abortive sexual encounter with a gang of boys. We see her trying to stop her



Harry Baer as Franz and Eva Mattes as Hanni in the 1972 film *Wild Game*, based on Franz Xaver Kroetz's play *Wildwechsel*. Kroetz dissociated himself from Fassbinder's film, calling it pornographic.

Lisa Kreuzer with Eva Mattes, made up to look like Fassbinder, in the film *A Man like Eva* (1983). It was directed by Radu Gabrea and based on an idea by Horst Schier and Laurens Straub, who says: 'One of the guesses is that he could feel like a woman more than a man.'

lover from moving out of the flat; see her with her former wife and their adolescent daughter, with Anton Saitz, and with a journalist, Burghard Hauer, who is almost willing to have a conversation, but gets pulled off to bed by his girlfriend.

Unlike *Fox*, *In a Year with 13 Moons* does not deal directly with the theme of exploitation, and contains no story which parallels the development of Fassbinder's relationship with his lover. At the end of *Fox*, the theme of exploitation had become intertwined with the theme of identity. 'Take everything,' says Fox to Eugen. 'I just want to be who I am.' But it is too late for him to be who he is, and, in so far as Erwin continues Fox's quest for identity, he tries to be who he is by becoming a female equivalent to himself.

In Munich a film was made in 1983 with an actress, Eva Mattes, as Fassbinder. The writer, Laurens Straub, who conceived the idea, argues that *In a Year with 13 Moons* may be autobiographical. 'He could feel like a woman more than a man', while many of his traits were feminine – 'his quickness, his sense for intrigue ... and maybe he was longing to be a woman.'[12] Eva Mattes, who had played in three Fassbinder films before she played Fassbinder, describes his voice as 'high-pitched and rasping – both. He could be very soft and then bawl someone out and then laugh at himself.'[13] Certainly he had always been on familiar terms with the female half of his psyche.

In a Year with 13 Moons Erwin/Elvira, the transsexual, is a character Fassbinder could identify with both Armin and himself. The slaughterhouse sequence, which comes near the beginning of the film, makes the character's past overlap with Armin's, and it expresses Fassbinder's mood after the suicide. Elvira has offered to show the prostitute, Red Zora, over the place where she once worked when she was a man. The sequence is both a piece of cruelty to the audience and a statement about human cruelty. The camera rolls mercilessly as helpless, immobilised, terrified animals have their throats slit by impassive butchers. We see the final spasms of the limbs, the blood flowing, the big warm bodies being hacked up as flesh is converted into meat for human consumption. Later, when unsubstantiated reference is made to concentration camps, we remember these images.

'Essentially,' wrote Artaud, 'cruelty means strictness, diligence, and implacable resolution, irreversible and absolute determination.' In all practical cruelty there was 'a sort of superior determinism to which the torturer-executioner is himself subject ... Cruelty is above all lucid, a sort of rigorous discipline, submission to necessity.' This tallies with the attitude Fassbinder depicts in the torturer-butchers who submit themselves, as Armin once had,

Fassbinder working as his own cameraman during the slaughterhouse sequence of *In a Year with 13 Moons* (1978).

to a discipline. Their faces are expressionless, their actions mechanical. Fassbinder may not, in this sequence, have been thinking about the Theatre of Cruelty, but he was thinking about theatre. The boyfriend who has just left Elvira, Christoph Hacker, was formerly an actor, and she confides in Zora about how he lived off her. 'I slept with other men to support us ... and he asked about the size of their cocks.' While we are watching the animals flailing about in their death agony, the soundtrack, working in ironical counterpoint, is giving us organ music and Elvira's petulant mimickry of her boyfriend's thespian rhetoric. The speech we hear is the closing monologue from Goethe's verse play *Torquato Tasso*. Reduced to a painful awareness of how precarious his existence is, the poet, oscillating between self-torture and self-confidence, grasps at the possibility that his creative powers may be on the point of reviving.

Though the story could have been told without it, the slaughterhouse sequence implicity invites us to associate the knife of the butcher with the

Ingrid Caven (Red Zora), Gottfried John (Anton Seitz) and Fassbinder working on *In a Year with 13 Moons*. It opens with a violent scene (*below*) in which the transsexual, Erwin/Elvira (Volker Spengler), is beaten up after an abortive sexual encounter with three boys by the River Main in Frankfurt.

Volker Spengler as the transsexual Erwin/Elvira, Elizabeth Trissenaar as his former wife, Irene, and Fassbinder (left to right), during the shooting of *In a Year with 13 Moons*.

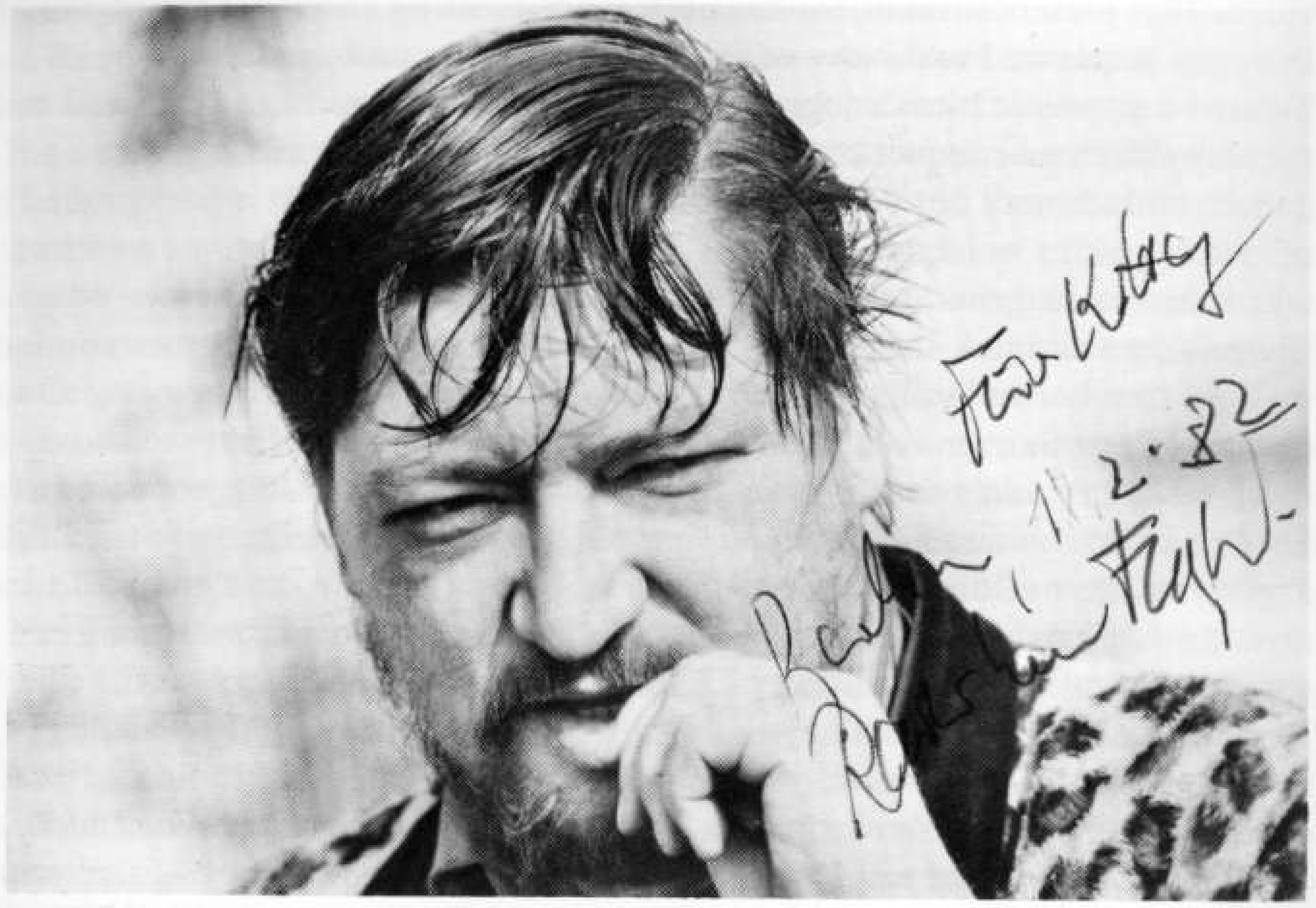
knife of the surgeon who has performed the operation in Casablanca, and though there is no knowing whether Fassbinder often pondered the question of how much conditioning effect the experience of butchery had had on Armin's personality, the theme is integrated into the plot of the film by making Erwin's wife, Irene, the daughter of the master butcher who owns the slaughterhouse. Profitable slaughter determines the environment in which personal relationships have to develop, and the association of Anton Saitz's brothels with concentration camps makes the same point in a different way. Erwin/Elvira is an innocent who can do nothing for a man like Saitz except become a sacrifice. When Saitz finally comes to Elvira's flat, he meets Zora (Ingrid Caven) and makes love to her.

The figure of Anton Saitz is developed out of the figure of the rich Jew in the unproduced play *The Garbage, the City and Death*. In presenting a man who might have died in the concentration camps as a man who runs brothels as if they were concentration camps – Fassbinder provides no explanation of what this might mean in practice – he is making a point that frequently recurs in his work: no clear distinction can be drawn between victim and victimiser. As he knew from his own behaviour, one turns readily into the other. Fox is primarily a victim, who releases only verbal aggression against other people, using physical aggression only against himself, except in two bar sequences, where he attacks a fat florist who calls him ugly and two American soldiers who rebuff his advances by asking how much he pays. But in the films, as in Fassbinder's own behaviour, there was only an invisible line to divide defensiveness from aggressiveness. Many acts of aggression were precipitated by a need to defend himself, as when he pitched into an inoffensive electrician to coerce Franco Nero into saying: 'I feel like a woman without breasts.'

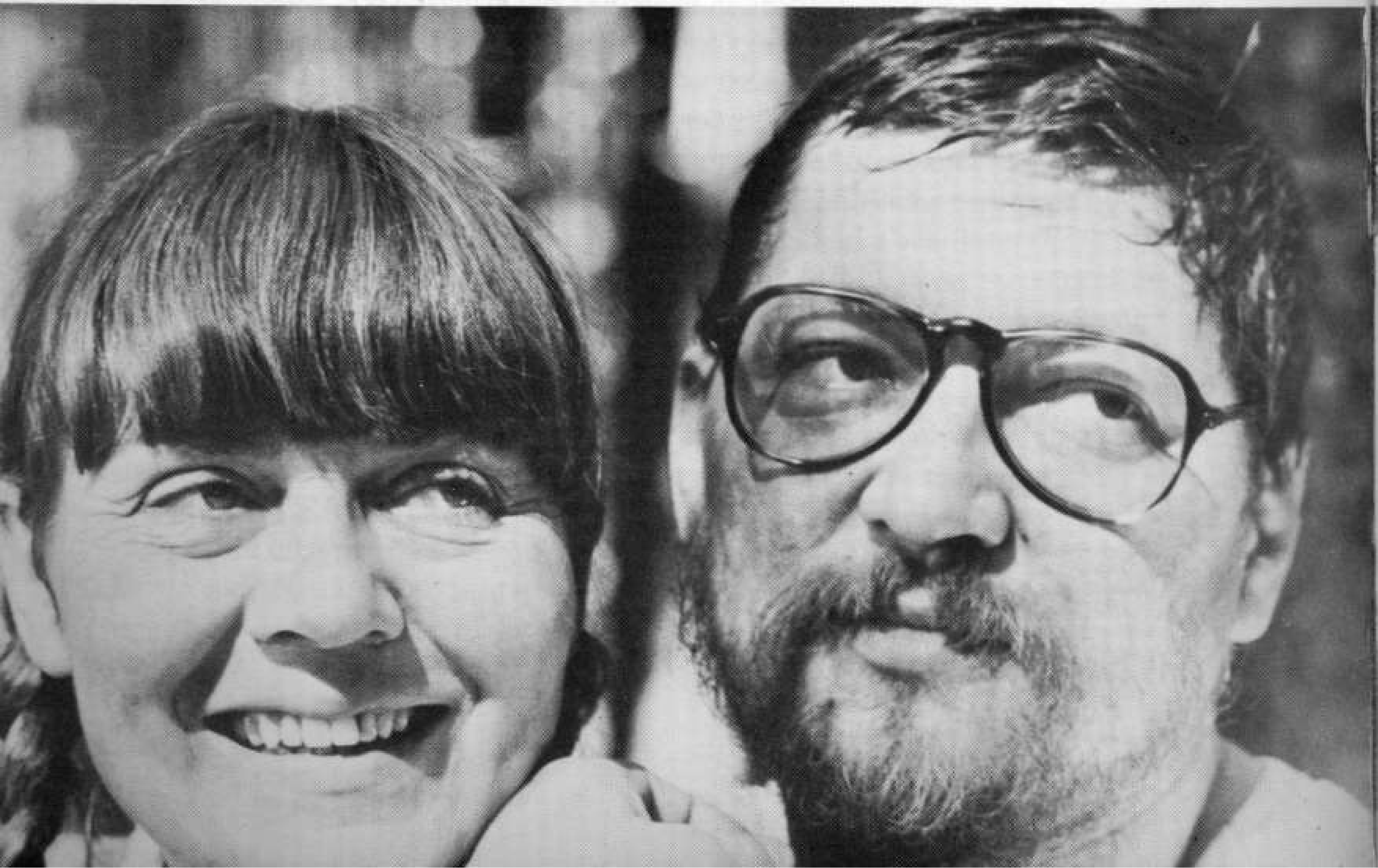
The actor Gottfried John, who plays Saitz, was often used by Fassbinder to play characters in whom there was some mystery about the combination of aggressiveness with diffidence, sensitivity with malice, destructiveness with childishness. One of the reasons Fassbinder was so fascinated by Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is that Franz Biberkopf can be violent with women but cannot easily discard them, while Reinhold rapidly loses interest in them but unless he is drunk, can never bring himself to throw them out, although he is capable of killing. Casting John as Reinhold, Fassbinder was still open-minded at the outset about the relationship between the two men: 'I want to know who this Reinhold really is. I've got to find out how he gets his power over Biberkopf ... Really I should have played Reinhold myself to find out.'[14] But he also wished he could have played Biberkopf, and Günter Lamprecht, the actor he finally cast, was frequently told that Fassbinder could have given a better performance and done a better Berlin accent.[15]

Both by his characterisation of Saitz in the script of *In a Year with 13 Moons* and by his casting of Gottfried John in the part, Fassbinder was making the character enigmatic in much the same way as (less than a year later) he would make Reinhold enigmatic. Before we meet Saitz, we look up at the enormous office block that is his headquarters, sharing the viewpoint of a former employee who, since he was sacked, has done nothing but stand about outside the building, drinking and looking up enviously. We expect Saitz to be a suave plutocrat, self-confident, extravagantly dressed, obviously well fed. Instead we are confronted with a lean, boyish figure in football shorts. He is playing with a ball in his office, and later on he performs a dance with his bodyguards, trying, not very successfully, to copy the movements of Jerry Lewis and the dancers doing a routine with him in a film on the television or video. This presentation of Saitz is both more amusing and more frightening than any sequence Fassbinder could have written around the stereotype of a bloated capitalistic bloodsucker, while the blood that has already flowed in the slaughterhouse sequence has left a lingering taste. Harmless games and dance routines may not be harmless if they take place against a background of unscrupulous consumerism, and we sense anyway that the momentum which has been generated is carrying us towards a violent climax. When Elvira's death comes, it seems to have been inevitable, but of all the rebuffs we have seen her suffering, none can be singled out as the most damaging. On one level Fassbinder may have been trying to prove that he was not exclusively to blame for Armin's death. Objectively he was not, but he does not seem to have convinced himself. In an interview he gave in 1980, he uneasily tried to argue that he no longer believed the death was a suicide, and that before meeting him, Armin had lived with a doctor for twelve years. 'He wasn't simply a primitive boy I found in a forest.'[16] But there is more to the film than an attempt to repudiate responsibility. A great deal of Fassbinder is projected into the character of Erwin/Elvira, while the presentation of the claustrophobic urban environment says more about the way Fassbinder experienced it than the way Armin did.

The activity of making the film helped him, as he says, to survive without either losing interest in everything that was going on around him or leaving Germany to become a farmer in some country such as Paraguay. But naturally he remained extremely sensitive on the subject of Armin's death, and Kurt Raab hurt him deeply in a drunken exchange of insults over a dinner table when Abdel was in prison. 'To keep up with your friends,' Fassbinder accused, 'you have to visit jails.' 'To keep up with yours,' Raab retorted, 'you have to visit cemeteries.' After this Fassbinder would have nothing to do with Raab. But today Raab says that there are only two people he ever loved. 'One is still alive and the other was Rainer.'[17]



Fassbinder in the leopardskin gear he wore in Wolf Gremm's 1981 film *Kamikaze 1989*. The photograph is inscribed 'For Kitty, Berlin, 18.2.82.' Kitty was Dieter Schidor, the producer of *Querelle*.
Below: Renate Leiffer and Fassbinder.



4 The Necessary Cruelty

Sadism and the Director

Some of the best directors work sadistically, while some of the best actors are masochistically in need of someone who can goad them into giving the audience more than they would give if left to their own devices. Fassbinder would often consolidate his power over actors and actresses by reducing them to tears or hysteria before building up their confidence again, together with their dependence. He behaved inconsistently. Sometimes he was too shy even to speak critically to an actor face-to-face; instead he would give his production assistant, Renate Leiffer, a message to deliver. At other times he would pitch in aggressively. According to her, 'You just have to tell actors how bad they are and they get hysterical. Especially Kurt Raab and Irm Hermann. Mostly the actors cry then, and that's what he liked, just to make them cry, and then he was building them up again. He could destroy you, and then two minutes later, he felt pity. Then he just embraced you and said: "Well, I didn't mean it like that." And then he liked you again. Because you were crying because of him.'[1]

He varied enormously, both in the extent to which he made actors feel dependent on him and in the way he went about it. Some actresses were treated with gentleness and respect. Barbara Sukowa, Rosel Zech and Eva Mattes, for instance, speak gratefully about his tenderness and generosity towards them.[2] Hanna Schygulla, who also received careful handling on stage and in films, held aloof from the social life that surrounded Fassbinder's productions. They both knew instinctively that their professional relationship could survive only if it remained a strictly professional relationship. She never even joined his dinner parties. If he was cruel to her, it seems to have been mainly in the periods when he was not using her.[3] Then he would remain incommunicado – when she telephoned, he was unavailable, and her pleas that he should ring her back were ignored. But he scarcely ever shouted at her. After seven years of watching them work closely and frequently together,

Hanna Schygulla as Effi Briest.

Above: In the little Baltic sea-town, Effi, bored with her elderly, high-principled husband Baron von Instetten, finds that she is less bored in the company of Major Crampas (Ulli Lommel), who is another victim of unhappy marriage.

Below: Liselotte Eder (Fassbinder's mother) as Luise von Briest at the bedside of her dying daughter.

Kurt Raab never heard Fassbinder bawl at her until she had indicated that she was no longer satisfied with the financial arrangement she had always accepted – 5000 marks plus a 2½% share of the film. After this, his patience snapped. During the shooting of *Effi Briest* she was told that he'd had enough of her. Couldn't bear to look at her any more. He'd go on working with her till the film was finished, but that would be quite enough for the next few years.[4] The film was finished in November 1973, and he did not use her again until *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, which was started in January 1978.

Actors, too, were handled in different ways, depending on their status, on how well he knew them, how much he liked them, how pleased he was with what they were doing. Any who were miscast were liable to be bullied mercilessly: Fassbinder could never forgive them for the mistake he had made in using them. He was also liable to be belligerent or coldly hostile when his jealousy was aroused. As Franz Biberkopf in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Günter Lamprecht had the most taxing role in fifteen hours of film that were to be shot over 154 days, but Fassbinder did nothing to make things easy for him. 'Working with Rainer was a torture,' he testified. In the flat in Berlin-Wedding, Fassbinder would play his cassette-recorder all day, 'and I believe it was deliberately left on to disturb me and to annoy me . . . because I said: "I can't stand it." I always need a quiet corner somewhere.' To the others it was a surprise that Fassbinder was never attacked by Lamprecht, who had grown up in Berlin-Alexanderplatz and had a reputation as a hard-hitter in pub brawls. Directing Gottfried John, Fassbinder kept a firm hand on him, but although it had been his own decision to cast Lamprecht as Biberkopf, he could never forgive the actor for usurping that character he had so long regarded as his own, and he left Lamprecht to find his own way, saying nothing but 'Thanks' at the end of each take, until Lamprecht, unable to stand it any longer, complained to the producer, threatening to stop work on the part. Reprimanded, Fassbinder promised to mend his ways, and the next day, he said: 'Thanks, Günter.'[5]

The strain on Fassbinder was enormous, but so was the strain on Lamprecht. The first time he reported sick it was during the fifth month of shooting, when he was suffering from concussion of the brain, and had a doctor's certificate to prove it. The next day he was due to shoot a sixteen-page scene with Hanna Schygulla, who was playing Eva. He appealed to the production assistant, Renate Leiffer, 'Tell Rainer I can only do twelve pages today, I can't manage sixteen,' and she came back with the message: 'Sixteen or we don't shoot at all.'[6]

At times like these, Fassbinder was incapable of behaving generously or even reasonably. To some extent he was indulging his own moods; to some extent he was sustaining a performance. The habit of acting tough was like a mask he could not have taken off without tearing flesh from his face. When his brutality, rudeness or violence provoked other people into being violent with him, he submitted unprotestingly, almost gladly.

Satan's Brew

Together with *In a Year with 13 Moons* and *Beware of a Holy Whore*, *Satan's Brew* is one of the most revealing films he made. He described it as a comedy about the non-functioning of the group, but also as a 'comedy about me if I were what I perhaps am but don't believe I am'.[7] Walter Kranz, who used to be known as the poet of the revolution, is now undergoing an identity crisis. ('I don't like myself any more. I like Stefan George, and therefore I am Stefan George.') In style the script is reminiscent of Joe Orton, and the exaggeration

Ernst with his collection of dead flies, and Margit Carstensen as Andrée, an unglamorous fan of Walter's, in *Satan's Brew*.

is no less outrageous. Fassbinder is taking an equally malicious delight in toppling figures of authority, while making all the permutations of human interaction look undignified and absurd. After watching Walter make love in his own flat to the prostitute he is meant to be interviewing, his wife Luise vents her spleen by slapping his demented brother, Ernst. When Andrée, a fan of Walter's, has her first meal in the flat, Ernst spits at her.

Andrée: He spat egg in my face.
Luise: Probably he didn't have anything else in his mouth.

Acts of physical and verbal aggression follow in rapid succession. Ernst collects flies and sometimes burns them by focussing the sun's rays through a magnifying glass. Women are assaulted and humiliated by both brothers. Fassbinder, who bought pornographic magazines, took ideas from them: Walter's rich patroness Irmgard von Witzleben is made to appear in kinky underwear before he gratuitously murders her. Then the policeman sent to question him is easily sidetracked into sharing his footbath. One grotesque situation gives way to another more rapidly than in Orton.

Andrée (Margit Carstensen in cruelly thick spectacles) is the woman who is the most humiliated, and we see her reciting the Lord's Prayer as, obeying Walter's orders, she goes to lock herself up in the cellar. In another sequence she has to crouch down on hands and knees, so that her master can use her as a seat. (In his antiteater Fassbinder had already used this image of a woman serving as a seat.) Eventually Andrée discovers that the sadist is also a masochist. After coercing a prostitute into giving him money, Walter is beaten up by two thugs. When he admits that he enjoyed the thrashing, Andrée's faith in him vanishes. 'You're weak, like me.' And she spits at him. Previously she had believed that the greatest pleasure in life was to be of use to the strong; now it is a matter of indifference whether he survives: 'That means very little, the death of a weak person.' The joke is partly about Nazism, and partly about what Fassbinder thought the others believed about him. But the film is not irrelevant to what he believed about himself. Thanks partly to James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart - or to the characters written for them - he was deeply entrenched in the habit of simulating toughness. One disadvantage of acquiring your education from the movies is that you never become fully aware of the extent to which you are playing a part.

Another of his basic problems derived from the combination of his shyness with his need to have people revolving around him like satellites. Only rarely would he release people from their dependence on him. After meeting Ursula Strätz he told her: 'I'll be the most intensive relationship in your life.'[8] Soon it became apparent that her emotional dependence was becoming burdensome, but in spite of - or perhaps partly because of - pleas from the jealous Irm Hermann, he never made an effort to release the suffering Ursula from her need for him.[9] He had learnt during his period of triangular living with Irm and Roser that jealousy could strengthen his hold both over the object of it and over the lover who was jealous, though sometimes this led to complications, as when Ursula seduced Günther Kaufmann.

To some extent the actors who always surrounded him served him as models serve an artist - their relationship with each other and with him would give him ideas he would use in his scripts. Even the much abused Irm was useful as a model. According to Ingrid Caven, 'Rainer found Irm fantastic, and there are lots of characters who have to do with her, with what she showed in her spontaneous hysteria.'[10] Occasionally, too, work done for a film would alter a real life relationship, and this was more likely to happen when cruelty or violence were involved. In 1970, when they made *Beware of a Holy Whore*, Ulli Lommel, who played Korbinian the production manager, was living with Katrin Schaake, who played the scriptgirl - Korbinian's stepmother. In one sequence he watches her betraying his father with an attractive Mexican, and, finding herself observed, she attacks her stepson. According to Harry Baer, who was both working as production assistant and playing a part, Fassbinder let her go on hitting her lover for a very long time. He was reduced to tears, while she noticed that she enjoyed hurting him. She suspected him of being unfaithful to her, and he never forgave her for beating him up. 'Years later Rainer is still childishly pleased that he separated the two of them and nevertheless retained the friendship of both.'[11]

Fassbinder's complex about his appearance made him jealous of other people's good looks, even when these were something he could exploit in plays and films. He liked having power over the appearance of his actors, and he was sometimes malicious in the transformations he demanded. When *Whity* was being made in Almeria during the spring of 1970, the make-up girl was told what she must do to Harry Baer, who was not allowed to watch in a looking-glass. After two or three hours of sitting in the corner of an old-fashioned hairdressing salon, he was finally allowed to see the results of her work. He looked like an albino, with colourless hair and colourless eyebrows.[12]

In 1972, when *Effi Briest* was being made, Fassbinder wanted Kurt Raab to play the chemist, Gieshübler, as a hunchback, like the mass-murderer Landru in Chabrol's film, which was one of Fassbinder's favourites. What worried Raab more was that Fassbinder wanted Gieshübler to have a bald patch. Eventually Raab let himself be persuaded, and, though he equipped himself with an expensive toupé and a fur hat, he felt humiliated. When the day arrived for the scene to be shot, the bald patch was freshly shaved and the padding tied on for the hump, but he felt so uncomfortable that he asked to be released from the role. Fassbinder agreed, apparently with little reluctance.[13]

Margit Carstensen felt similarly uncomfortable as the gauche, plain, bespectacled Andrée in *Satan's Brew*. She did not ask to be released from the part, but Fassbinder accused her of not really wanting to play it. 'We were suspicious of each other, and I became more and more diffident in what I was offering as an actress. Inwardly I was very inhibited, which is something he often wants.'[14] For Fassbinder personal malice had become inseparable from professional ruthlessness, but Carstensen's performance is more than adequate, and her personal discomfort no doubt contributed to it.

In directing actors Fassbinder's decisions were less contingent on calculation than on compulsion. It was only occasionally that he indulged the whim of making attractive actors look less attractive, but he was regularly compulsive about testing how far he could make people go in their obedience to him. Sometimes a performance would be damaged by resentment, self-consciousness or mortification, but – since many actors work best under the strongest pressure – the results were often outstandingly good. Macha Méril, who played Charlotte in Jean-Luc Godard's film *A Married Woman*, played the dumb governess, Traunitz, in Fassbinder's *Chinese Roulette*. 'In working with him,' she said, 'it's the way it is with love. Often you simply mustn't say anything. You just understand . . . I don't ask him any questions about why or how, I try to guess it or sense it. In that way Fassbinder is very similar to the director Godard: they don't explain things. But it's fun to work with him; you know that he's taking more from you, demanding more, than others do or can.'[15]

If it was his Artaudian principle to trust his own instincts, dominating actors without questioning himself about motive, one danger in merging his private life with his professional life was that he would feel justified in doing anything that would deepen the actor's dependence on him. He had always been fairly insidious in his methods of exerting influence, and as he became increasingly addicted to drugs, he became increasingly irresponsible. Driving with Armin and Raab in Turkey when he had forgotten his spectacles, he collided with the trailer of a tractor, causing Armin a concussion of the brain and injuries to his face and head, which required stitches. But Fassbinder denied responsibility. 'It wasn't my fault. You saw that, Kurt.'[16]

When he became addicted to cocaine, it was virtually inevitable that Armin should, but not that Raab should. In 1976, when they were working on Fassbinder's adaptation of Oskar Maria Graf's novel *Bolwieser*, Raab was not only playing the lead but, as art director, choosing the locations. At first Fassbinder seemed quite pleased with his choices, but on the day before shooting was to begin in Hof, Fassbinder began to raise all kinds of objections, and eventually it dawned on Raab that Hof involved the man who was supplying him with drugs in making too long a journey. After three weeks there, they would all move back to Munich, but on the first day of shooting, Fassbinder produced a white pillbox from his pocket, showing Raab about 10 grammes of white powder. Kurt must take it, he said. It would give an incredible boost to his performance. It wasn't in the least dangerous. All he had to do was sniff, and he would immediately be liberated from neurosis and inhibition. Suddenly he would find that he could play the part, which was slightly outside his normal range. He would act better than ever before.

For three weeks Raab resisted, though Fassbinder went on persuading him to make the experiment. Finally, depressed by a dark, rainy November day, and by a sequence in which he had to visit a dying man, he let Fassbinder lead him into an empty room and watched while the crystals were ground into fine powder. Sniffing it up in the way Fassbinder demonstrated, Raab felt something change inside his brain. Everything that was troublesome seemed to disappear. Euphorically he played the sequence, believing himself to be superb. After this, Raab wanted cocaine every day, and Fassbinder always provided some, as well as encouraging him to believe that he was acting supremely well. And while he was taking the drug, Raab found he could drink as much alcohol as he liked without its having any apparent effect. His performance is remarkably uninhibited, but he was now more dependent on Fassbinder than he had ever been before.[17]

After learning a great deal from the writings of the Marquis de Sade, Baudelaire was the first Romantic to make the unromantic point that one lover was almost invariably more eager than the other, and he sometimes used the Sadean image of executioner and victim, or compared the lovers with two combatant warriors. Awareness of this inequality and this conflict was central to both Fassbinder's life and his work. 'All feelings are potentially exploitable,' he believed, and if the choice was between exploiting and being exploited, he had no doubt about which he preferred.

It is the way we are educated, he maintained, that makes it impossible for love to flow freely between two people without a battle for power. 'The one who loves less has more power, obviously.' But the power does not always compensate for the strain imposed by emotional dependence. 'That's why most of the time it takes a very ugly turn. I know of almost no relationship I'd call beautiful - not between anyone at all.'[18]

Not all his films make personal relationships seem as clumsy and grotesque as they do in *Satan's Brew*, but nearly all the relationships which start happily end miserably. The most direct attempt at portraying sadistic cruelty in a relationship is in the 1973 film *Martha*, which Fassbinder describes as telling 'the story of a woman whose happiness comes from being oppressed'.[19] The film establishes nothing about Martha's education, but it begins by sketching in her relationship with her cold, unloving, autocratic father, who is on holiday with her in Rome when he dies of a heart attack on the Spanish Steps, after he has refused her offer of a helping arm. His last words are: 'Please let go of me.' She then seems more anguished by the theft of her handbag than by his death, which she obviously finds liberating, but she does not preserve her liberty for long. She falls in love with Helmut Salaman, an engineer, who looks almost as old as her father and abuses her in much the same way as her mother. The mother tells her: 'You're a repulsive young virgin, Martha. You disgust me.' Helmut - Fassbinder gives him the same Christian name as his father - courts her by insulting her: 'I don't find you beautiful, and not at all attractive or appealing . . . You look to me as though your body would smell bad.' But this is said in the middle of a sequence in which they are magnetically drawn to each other. The mixture of attraction and verbal aggression anticipates the mixture in *Fox*, which was started just over six months later.

As in *Fox* and *I Only Want You to Love Me*, the audience is disturbingly presented with an ineluctable progression which can end only in disaster; what we watch in *Martha* is not a series of spending sprees but a series of sadistic assaults on the woman, each making a further inroad into her freedom. In a fairground scene, Helmut scares her by taking her on a roller-coaster. 'Fear is there to be overcome,' he tells her. At the end of the ride she is sick, and she has scarcely stopped puking when he proposes marriage. Her answer is: 'You don't know how much I was longing for those words.' Which makes him look disgusted.

His masterful maltreatment of her after they marry is reminiscent of Petruchio's taming of Katharina. On their honeymoon, Helmut orders cornflakes and tea for Martha's breakfast and refuses to let her smoke. Objecting to her white skin, he encourages her to sunbathe recklessly, while he sits in a deck-chair, fully dressed, reading a book. When she is seen suffering from sunburn, he is not apologetic. 'Not better yet? You shouldn't have gone to sleep in the

Above: The formal dinner party in *Martha* (1973), at which Martha (Margit Carstensen) meets Helmut (Karlheinz Böhm), who is seen here arriving late. *Below:* After her marriage to the sadistic Helmut, Martha is oppressed and sometimes terrified.

sun.' And with no thought for either her mood or the soreness of her skin, he takes her.

Returning to Germany, he drives her not, as she was expecting, to her parents' house, but to a house he has been able to buy cheaply, because a murder was committed there. He does not allow her to smoke indoors, and when she turns up at the library, where, as far as she knows, she is still working, she finds that he has given notice for her. The audience becomes increasingly outraged, increasingly apprehensive for her.

When Helmut returns after a week's absence, she greets him affectionately and submissively, only to be laughed at. He yells at her for playing Donizetti on the gramophone. Donizetti's music is slime, he tells her. She must learn, he insists. He rejects the food she has lovingly cooked – pig's kidneys in burgundy sauce, which he had described as his favourite dish. He gives her a book to read, rather as if she were a schoolgirl who should expect homework: 'I'd like you to understand something about my profession. I'd like to be able to talk to you.'

That he likes to inflict pain when he makes love can be inferred from the bite-mark we see on her, and unable to confide in her closest girlfriend, she becomes increasingly lonely, even before he asks her never to go out of the house. When she suggests they should have a child, the idea is rejected contemptuously: 'Think of your mother. She's ill. Or do you want a child to come into the world with your weak head?' When she gets herself a cat, she finds it dead in a position that suggests he killed it. When she tries to run away with the librarian, they are involved in a car-smash, which kills the young man and cripples her. As the film ends we see Helmut pushing her home in a wheelchair. The metal doors of the hospital close behind them.

In Fassbinder's summing up, 'Martha is really not suppressed, but educated ... If, at the end of the film, she's no longer capable of living alone, she has achieved what she wanted ... Most men cannot be as perfectly oppressive as women would wish.' Fassbinder may have considered himself to be one of the few men who could be as perfectly oppressive as actors would wish. Talking on television to an interviewer in January 1978 about Ingrid Caven, he came out with a rather revealing sentence: 'Of all the actresses and actors I've been involved with, Ingrid is the least willing to let herself be reduced to being an actress, and the one who, more than anyone else, remains something other than an actress, in other words, the one who, more than the others, carries on a dialogue on an equal footing. I mean if people say there are elective affinities in life, I'd say that's what matters to me most.' But he had two sets of elective affinities. The men and women who were most important in his life were all given roles in his films, but not the most important roles, except in some of the early films starring Günther Kaufmann, Kurt Raab and Harry Baer. None of his female stars and none of the male stars in his later films played important roles in his private life.[20] Accustomed to dominating actresses, he admired Ingrid Caven in inverse proportion to her pliability; Hanna Schygulla, on the other hand, he described as a very 'obedient' actress, and in general he may have felt that what he said about women was also true of actors – that no director can be as perfectly oppressive as they would wish.

Sometimes, especially at the end of his short life, his shyness worked hand in hand with his sadism. Sometimes he would say nothing to actors who were patently in need of reassurance or help – partly because he was nervous of them, partly because he assumed that the only way to be sure of their dependence was to keep them in a permanent state of fear. In the week before the shooting started for *Querelle*, the American actor Brad Davis was understandably nervous, especially about the homosexual love scenes he would have to play, and he turned up for dinner every night, expecting to be taken aside for a briefing about the character. But Fassbinder ignored him, and if Davis tried to start a conversation in English, Fassbinder would say in German: 'Tell him to eat his foot and not talk.' On the night before the shooting started, Davis went to Dieter Schidor, the producer, saying he couldn't play the part. 'This man hasn't spoken one word to me.' Schidor pleaded with Fassbinder, who eventually promised that he would speak to Davis, but all he said was: 'I'm not going to ask anything of you that you can't do as an actor.'[21]

During the shooting, the relationship between director and actor deteriorated still further, which may have meant that Fassbinder came to believe Davis was miscast. The hostility towards Burkhard Driest, who played Mario, the corrupt policeman, may have derived either from a similar feeling about the miscasting or from an irrational rivalry over the script. Driest had written the first version of the adaptation. He had the immediate feeling: 'Fassbinder is out to subjugate me. He will use any means.' Fassbinder's first instruction was that Driest should wear a pair of welder's goggles, and when Driest wanted to play the part in a rather beautiful old leather jacket, which he loved, Fassbinder's response was: 'All right you can wear it, but first of all you must cut the sleeves off yourself.' Driest concluded that 'Fassbinder is a man, a director, who can only work with people who are willing to be submissive and take pleasure in it.'[22] Driest was also upset by the way Fassbinder handled fight sequences, exposing actors to the risk of breaking their ribs.

He did treat actors badly, but if, on the whole, they enjoyed it, it may have been partly because with him, more than with most directors, filming was like playing a dangerous adult game in which he was exposing himself to risks no smaller than the ones he was inflicting on them. He had some affinities with the racing motorist or the stunt man who feels most alive when close to death. Even the risk of sunburn, which Helmut inflicts on Martha in the film, derives from something Fassbinder inflicted on himself. In the spring of 1972 he took Salem, Irm and Raab on a trip to Senegal. To please Salem, who liked deep-sea fishing, he rented a yacht. Lying on the upper deck, he was misled by the wind about the strength of the sun. Badly burned, he pulled overnight at the itching skin. Beside his bed in the morning Raab found small piles of dead skin he had peeled off. The next day, in spite of having the shivers and a temperature, he drove the others to visit an island Irm had read about in a guidebook. When they got back, he had white blisters all over his skin, which meant that he had third degree burns, but even when they went on to Dakar, he refused to see a doctor.[23] Long before he became addicted to cocaine, the risk-taking involved him in considerable cruelty towards himself.

Before he could subjugate anyone else, he had to subjugate himself, and the cruelty was integral to his act of toughness. When he boasted about being stronger than nature or having more energy than a nuclear bomb, it was himself he was needing to convince. Before he could test how far it was possible to drive an actor, he needed to find out how far he could drive himself, and drug-taking was both a means of stimulating himself and a means of testing his power of survival. At the end of his life he was averaging about three hours' sleep a night, overeating, drinking two bottles of bourbon a day, as well as strong Bloody Marys, smoking marihuana or hashish on the set and taking powerful sleeping pills called Mandrax. One night in Cannes, when Dieter Schidor spent a night in the same hotel bedroom, Fassbinder was showing off about how much he would take into his system when he was trying to sleep. Schidor had to watch while he sniffed cocaine, took three Valium 10 and drank three glasses of bourbon. 'If I'm not asleep within fifteen minutes,' he said, 'I'm going to take the same again.' Fifteen minutes later he was still awake, and he did take the same again. 'If you did that,' he told Schidor, 'you'd be dead already.'[24]

5 Themes and Variations

Trying to describe how he'd been influenced by *Imitation of Life* and Douglas Sirk's other films, Fassbinder said that previously he'd believed it was necessary to keep his distance from Hollywood-style storytelling if he wanted to work seriously. Sirk had emancipated him from the fear of being vulgar. 'Sirk made me realise that it's perfectly possible to tell stories in such a way that people would normally say they're not being told truthfully.'[1] The word 'melodramatic' is often used about Fassbinder's plots; it would be more accurate to say that, like Sirk, he was taking subtleties in his stride while going all out to make a strong impact on a big audience. Unlike Sirk's films, though, Fassbinder's have a style and tone which often assort oddly with their moral undertow. Preoccupied with the relationship between the individual and the group, he almost invariably viewed personal relationships in a social perspective, while he was so seriously concerned with the aftermath of Nazism in Germany that his work often seems to ask for comparison with that of Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass.

Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven

Fassbinder could not have been so prolific if he had not been eclectic; the film most obviously influenced by Böll is *Mother Kusters' Trip to Heaven* (1975) which would not have been what it was but for the novel Böll published in 1974, *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*. The title of Fassbinder's film echoes the title of Piel Jutzi's 1929 film *Mother Krause's Trip to Happiness*, which centres on the suicide of an old working-class woman but has an upbeat ending: workers are marching to make sure there will be no social injustice in the future. Fassbinder contradicts this naïve optimism by showing how left-wing factions exploit the bereavement of an old working-class woman (Brigitte Mira) whose husband has run amok because of pressures that have built up imperceptibly. After twenty years of working in a tyre factory, Herr Küsters has reacted to the prospect of redundancy by killing one of his bosses and

Fassbinder with Hanna Schygulla during the work on *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978).

Conflicting preoccupations in *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven*. Frau Küsters (Brigitte Mira) is appalled at the way the newspapers have distorted the facts about the death of her husband; the Communist newspaper proprietor Tillmann sees that he can exploit the old woman; Frau Tillmann (Margit Carstensen) looks in the mirror.

then committing suicide. The incident promises succulent fodder for the illustrated papers, and an opportunistic young journalist (Gottfried John) gains the confidence of the family by winning the favours of the attractive daughter (Ingrid Caven) who wants to make a career as a singer. Böll's novel had dealt with the damage inflicted by the illustrated press in twisting facts to provide appetisingly scandalous stories. Katharina Blum is a shy, innocuous girl who is made out to be a bandit's moll, while her lover is portrayed as a master criminal. Katharina's life is ruined by the large-scale scandal; in Fassbinder's film the old woman is deeply hurt by a sensational and inaccurate account of the killings in the factory. Like Böll, Fassbinder was aiming his satire at the Springer Press, publishers of the most popular illustrated papers in Germany, but, unlike Böll's, Fassbinder's style was pushing him towards clichés, simplifications and distortions not totally unlike those of the papers he was attacking, while his main target, in any event, was the political factions. Depressed, lonely and desperate for human warmth, Frau Küsters finds that little comfort is to be had either from her weak son and his wife (Armin Meier and Irm Hermann) or from her daughter, who is busy with her career and her lover. The old woman gladly accepts the friendship proffered by two rich communists, a newspaper proprietor (Karlheinz Böhm) and his wife (Margit Carstensen), who promise they will use their paper to reinstate the reputation of the dead worker. Gratefully Frau Küsters joins the Party, only to find that she is being used for purposes of publicity. She switches her allegiance to a young anarchist, who seems more likely to take effective action, but after he has accompanied her to the office of the illustrated newspaper, the anarchist and his supporters produce weapons and demand the immediate release of all political prisoners in West Germany. In the original version of the film, rolling titles give us the end of the story: she and the anarchist are killed by the police in a shoot-out. In the alternative ending Fassbinder produced as an ironical sop to left-wing critics, Frau Küsters finds happiness with a night watchman. Like the charwoman and the immigrant in *Fear Eats the Soul*, the two unlikely lovers are united by their loneliness, and in both films Fassbinder makes good use of Brigitte Mira, a middle-aged actress of great strength and warmth – an actress who would have been used by most directors only in supporting roles.

Böll, Grass and Fassbinder

During Konrad Adenauer's chancellorship (1949–63) the conscience of West Germany was mostly inaudible, but it was to be heard ticking loudly in the novels of Böll and Grass. Having served as a soldier, Böll used the war as his model for the destructive, unanalysable forces that uncontrollably subverted all attempts to create democratic, tolerant, progressive moral structures, and he castigated the new Germany for its nervous reluctance to look backwards. 'We live in a land that represses its history.' One of the characters in *Group Portrait with Lady* keeps saying, disingenuously: 'I'm no monster, you know'; the newspaper magnate in *The Safety Net* believes that this is 'the era of nice monsters'. Like Grass, Böll has wrestled manfully with the problems of using a language that had been debased and almost discredited by the politics it had appeared to nurture. Nazism, said Böll, 'has infected our thinking, contaminated the air we breathe, the words we speak and write'.

Fassbinder had a stronger affinity with Grass than with Böll. As George Steiner has put it, *The Tin Drum* and *Dog Years* give the impression 'that

Above: Fear Eats the Soul (1973): El Hedi Ben Salem as Ali and Barbara Valentin as Barbara, the owner of a bar he frequents.
Below: Ali with Emmi (Brigitte Mira), the warm-hearted charwoman he marries.

there is in Grass a deliberate streak of infantilism, a child's uninhibited, brutal directness of feeling'. In *Dog Years* the SA gang-up in the beer-hall 'brings to light the banal roots of Nazi bestiality. We see the steamy, cosy vulgarity of German lower-middle-class manners, the wet cigar ash and the slap on the buttocks twist, by a sudden jerk of hysteria, into the sweating fury of the killers.'[2] This is exactly what Fassbinder was brilliantly able to reveal on film – the complacent racialism of the young people in *Katzelmacher* and the neighbours in *Fear Eats the Soul*, the ignorant prejudices that are sanctified by cliché and congealed by boredom, the easy slide into murderous violence. Like Grass, Fassbinder had a keen eye for cracks in the glossy surface of German prosperity during the Economic Miracle, for the uneasiness under the vulgar confidence of fat businessmen and industrialists.

But where Böll and Grass were working in a medium that enabled them to smash clichés and use language with precision and gusto, Fassbinder was limited not only by his medium but by the way Sirk's example had encouraged him to use it. Many of Fassbinder's subtle cinematic effects are achieved when the style comments on another style in which the medium has been used. In *Lili Marleen* a deliberate *kitsch* rubs in the point about the facile emotionality of the song and the spurious glamour of Nazism. *Veronika Voss* mimics the style of the old UFA melodramas in which the actress made her name famous. In *Lola*, though the colours are lush, some of the references point backwards to an old black-and-white film. It's not only the plot of *The Blue Angel* which is recalled but the lurid emotional atmosphere; in *Lola* the *kitsch* is more controlled, and partly ironic.

Michael McLernon (Swiss frontier official), Hanna Schygulla (Wilkie) and Giancarlo Giannini (Robert Mendelssohn), left to right, in the 1980 film *Lili Marleen*.

Fassbinder's Subject Matter

In Fassbinder's subject-matter there is less variety than there is in his style. Although, in his efforts to reach a wider audience, he shifted from predominantly working-class to predominantly middle-class themes, and although his life was transformed by success, fame and money, his films go on using the same material that had been treated in his early plays. In *Katzelmacher* (1968), the first play of his own to be staged in the antiteater, he was already concerning himself with group behaviour that tends towards Fascism.

Miscellaneous aggressions, frustrations, resentments, dissatisfactions are channeled into an unreasoning jealousy of a man who looks different and speaks a different language. The jealousy is inflamed by the sexual success he enjoys and by the rumour that he has an enviably large penis. The play looks forward to the film *Fear Eats the Soul*, in which a similar hostility is aroused by the liaison between the elderly charwoman and the African immigrant worker.

In many of the films, as in many of the plays, an individual struggles hopelessly against the group, the struggle ending either in the destruction or self-destruction of the individual. In both the individual and the group self-defence turns rapidly into aggression. In *Bremen Coffee* the murderess becomes a murderess only because she has no other way of defending herself against the brutal onslaughts of her sadistic but unexceptional husband. In the play *Werewolf* the naïve medieval mass-murderer opens the skulls of his fellow-citizens because he cannot open their ears to his subversive preaching. Without violence there can be no emancipation.

The film *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* is the most realistic of the early films because Fassbinder wants to give a straightforward answer to the question. Herr R. is an ordinary middle-class citizen, a technical draughtsman, married, with a young son. His social life appears to be normal: he is seen in his office, in his home, in the street, with neighbours, with friends, with relations, at the school's parents' evening. Most of the dialogue was improvised, and the funniest, most memorable sequence occurs in a record shop, where Kurt Raab as Herr R., failing to remember the title of the tune he wants to buy for his wife, tries to hum it to the giggling sales-girls. As in *The Merchant of the Four Seasons*, other people's snobbery and money-consciousness help to push the central male character towards suicidal depression; as in both *In a Year with 13 Moons* and *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven*, no single incident precipitates the suicide. Herr R. is trying to watch television. The set is not working properly. He is irritated simultaneously by a neighbour who is chatting to his wife about a ski-ing holiday. He kills the neighbour with a candlestick, kills his wife, kills their son. The next day he hangs himself in the lavatory. Fassbinder probably knew he was more likely to get the performance he wanted from Kurt Raab if he cast Lilith Ungerer as his wife. She was an antiteater actress Raab had always disliked. As Raab's mother Fassbinder cast Alexander Kluge's charwoman.[1] These provocations may seem petty, but they must have reinforced the concatenation of petty provocations in the plot.

The theme of butchery surfaces most uncomfortably in the slaughterhouse sequence of *In a Year with 13 Moons*, but the theme, which highlights the relationship between consumerism and wholesale killing, occurs in the early work. One of the monologues in *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now* tells us that the Moors murderer Ian Brady once worked for a butcher. In the play *Blood on the Cat's Neck* one of the characters is a master butcher who used to be beaten up regularly by his boss when he was an apprentice, and who now dishes out beatings both to his own apprentice and to the Soldier's Widow who goes to bed with him. He readily threatens violence to other people and, being in the habit of killing, threatens murder. In *Wild Game*, in which a fourteen-year-old girl encourages her nineteen-year-old lover to murder her father, the boy, Franz, works in a chicken factory: one long tracking shot shows how a bird becomes a packaged foodstuff. In *Bolwieser* Hanna's first lover, Merkl, owns a butcher's shop; her uxorious husband, who delights in what she cooks for him, in unsuspicious about her eager visits to Merkl's shop.

Premièred in January 1971, *Blood on the Cat's Neck* derives from Peter Handke's 1968 play *Kaspar*, which, in Handke's words, 'shows how someone can be led into speaking by speaking'. Having spent the first sixteen years of his life cooped up in a wooden compartment, Kaspar has never spoken.

Following Ionesco, who had shown how language could become an instrument of tyranny and oppression, Handke presented a series of verbal assaults on Kaspar's linguistic virginity: painfully losing his innocence, he learns how to use the words that are imposed on him. Following both Ionesco and Handke, Fassbinder presents a girl from outer space who has been sent to earth on a mission to write a report on human democracy. She has no difficulty in saying words, but she does not understand what they mean to humans. Much of the dialogue, therefore, consists of interwoven monologue: people are reacting to Phoebe, who is beautiful, but she cannot react to them. In her incomprehension she is similar to the immigrant workers in *Katzelmacher* and *Fear Eats the Soul*, who understand only a small proportion of what is said to them.

Necessarily, then, most of the themes in *Blood on the Cat's Neck* are presented verbally. Looking backwards to Fassbinder's uncle and forwards to *The Merchant of the Four Seasons*, which was made later the same year, the Policeman talks about an uncle of his who was also in the force but, after being dismissed, sold fruit from a barrow. The Lover anticipates the plot of *Martha* by telling Phoebe how beautiful it is to be submissive. 'You can learn how to enjoy it. . . . You'll learn how to prostrate yourself in front of the man you love when he looks at you and to be ready for him. And if he pushes you away, then you'll kiss his feet in gratitude, because then you should recognise what it means when he wants to use you.' The homosexual teacher makes out a case for homosexuality and a case for education. The Soldier tells Phoebe that he is looking for a woman who is like his mum. The Girl talks to her (rather as the wives talk in *Women in New York*) about fitting in without giving in. The Model talks (like Karin in *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*) about how little it means to let a man make love to her. 'It passes over me, like drinking coffee or being out in the rain.' She is scared of growing old and neither she nor the Girl cares about survival. 'Who wants to survive? It's luxuries that make life worth living.' (This was Fassbinder's attitude.) The theme of prostitution is introduced by the Lover, who has been selling himself to older women: 'They're all so grateful there can't be any harm in it.' A gossipy conversation between the Model and the Mistress introduces the story of a red-headed woman who divorces her crippled husband to marry a Turkish immigrant.

Few of the fragmented sequences bear directly on the question of whether human society is organised democratically, but in the way it shakes the kaleidoscope, the play suggests that people can only make each other miserable and that liberal values cannot be expected to survive. Fassbinder believed that in Germany Nazism was not dead, but just as he liked to illuminate oppression through the behaviour of the oppressed, he like to deal with political questions by inspecting the slimy underside. In *Katzelmacher* no explicit comparison is made between Hitlerism and the spirit that unites the German boys when they beat up the Greek.

Pre-Paradise Sorry Now

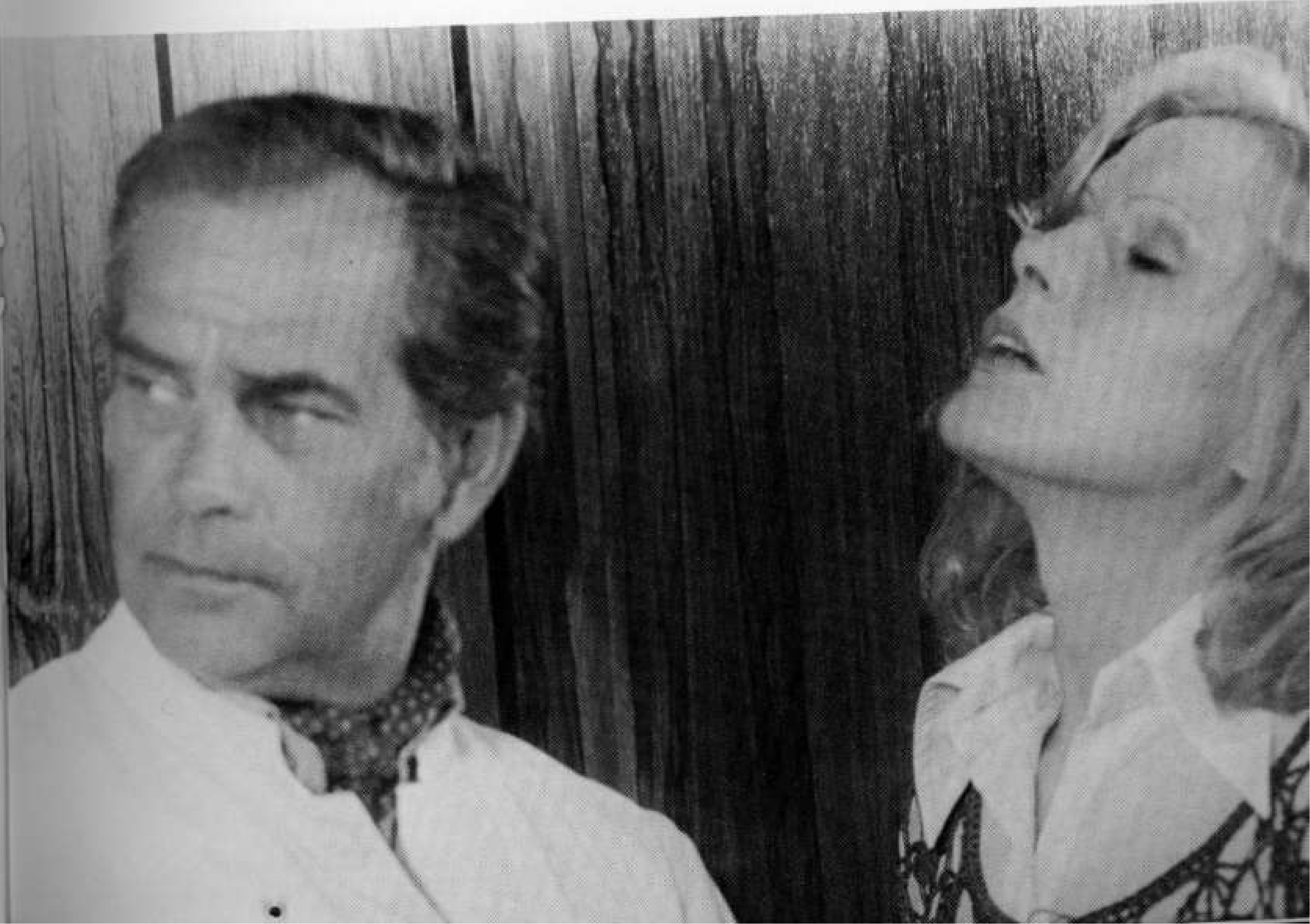
In *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now* fifteen of the short sequences are scenes of everyday life, illustrating behaviour that tends in the direction of fascism, fifteen are narratives about Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, or imaginative reconstructions of dialogue between the two of them, and nine are texts based on cannibalistic rituals and liturgies. The title of the play points to its origins in Fassbinder's angry reaction to the optimism of the Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*, which glibly suggested that the world could be redeemed by the endemic power of love. Fassbinder's point was that it would not be so easy to rout the forces which had found their expression in cannibalism, concentration camps and gangsterism. As in *Blood on the Cat's Neck*, the structure is kaleidoscopic – the director is allowed to choose the order in which the scenes are played – but the pressure of the action is to demonstrate that the viciousness of the murderers has a social matrix.

Loneliness and Angst

Nothing preoccupied Fassbinder more deeply than loneliness and the *Angst* that ensues from it. In *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* it is loneliness that drives Petra into the unlikely liaison with Karin and loneliness that makes its failure unbearable. The anger she discharges on the crockery, her daughter, her mother, her friend Sidonie and on Marlene does not distract her from the emptiness in her life. In *The Merchant of the Four Seasons* Hans Epp becomes increasingly lonely in the midst of his family: he uses drink – as so many of Fassbinder's later characters will use drugs – to do away with himself. In *Martha* marriage, which seems to offer an escape from loneliness, intensifies it. Condemned to spending the week alone in the sinister house, without even the cat to keep her company, the woman enters into a state of anxiety, which is reiterated and developed in another role written for Margit Carstensen in the 1975 film *Fear of Fear*, and later in the character of the ageing lonely actress Veronika Voss.

In *Fear of Fear* the film unequivocally identifies with the viewpoint of the

Above: Armin Meier (Karli) and Margit Carstensen (Margot) in *Fear of Fear* (1975).
Below: Adrian Hoven (Dr Merck) and Margit Carstensen in *Fear of Fear.*



suffering woman. At moments when her vision blurs, the picture on the screen twitches. The film is based partly on a piece of semi-autobiographical writing by a young housewife, Asta Scheib, but, as always, Fassbinder makes the material his own. The hysteria of this married woman, Margot, is treated quite differently from the hysteria of Martha or Herr R. or Peter in *I Only Want You to Love Me*. External pressures count for less than ever before, though they are not left out of account. We see that Margot is not getting the emotional support she needs from Kurt, her husband, who is preoccupied with an examination he has to take. Instead of sympathising or trying to help, her mother and her sister take ill-disguised pleasure in her predicament, which enables them to feel superior. 'We are normal,' claims her complacent sister, while her frigid mother believes it to be abnormal for a woman always to be kissing her child. The representative of education is played by Fassbinder's mother, and her character is oppressive, like Margot's mother. When infants are punished in the kindergarten, Margot indignantly demands: 'How can four-year-old children be wicked?'

The only disinterested sympathy available to her is sympathy she rejects. A neighbour, Herr Bauer, stares at her strangely and warns her to take care. She needs someone, he tells her, with whom conversation is possible, but she finds him frightening and runs away, explaining to her daughter, Bibi, that he is mad. We see Margot with unhelpful doctors. She is injected with tranquillisers. After the camera has strayed, during one consultation, to a wall-chart of the nervous system, she is told that she is suffering from nervous tension, and valium is prescribed.

Carstensen, who is more resourceful than Hanna Schygulla in depicting distress, produced apparently uncontrolled movements at the corners of her mouth, and the film heightens the tension by introducing relaxation contrapuntally, as when a gramophone plays the trio from *Der Rosenkavalier*. As so often, Fassbinder makes clever use of mirrors, especially when we see Margot looking at a double reflection in the bathroom, and he suggests the claustrophobia of provincial life by situating the main locations close together. The chemist's shop, which becomes increasingly important as her need for valium grows, is close to the block of flats, in which her mother and sister live above her, so she may be under observation whenever she goes into the flat or comes out of it. The shot of her sister watching from an upstairs window recalls a shot of a disapproving neighbour looking down on the lovers in *Fear Eats the Soul*. In Fassbinder's films the social dimension is often suggested by showing people spying on each other or gossiping about each other. The freedom of the individual is eroded by conformist prejudice. As in *Veronika Voss* the

provider of drugs is in a privileged position, which is liable to be exploited, and in *Martha* the chemist (Adrian Hoven) uses his power to make her accept him as a lover. He also protects her after she has cut her wrist, bandaging it for her and telling her husband it was an accident. But the structure of the film enforces a parallel between her fate and Herr Bauer's. At the end she is told he has killed himself and we see the coffin being brought out of his house.

Veronika Voss

Veronika Voss combines the interrelated themes of loneliness, Angst and addiction, with the theme of corruption in ostensibly democratic societies. In films such as this one, Fassbinder is dealing with the fundamental question he posed but left unanswered in *Blood on the Cat's Neck*. The exploitation that flourishes under capitalism's free-for-all is represented in the film by the

Fassbinder with Cornelia Froboess (Henriette, left) and Rosel Zech (Veronika) during the shooting of *Veronika Voss* (1981).

Veronika Voss's swansong in the 1981 film. *Above:* Rosel Zech as the actress singing at a farewell party given in her honour when she is about to leave – or so it appears – for Hollywood. Instead (*below*), Dr Katz keeps her imprisoned in the flat. On Easter Sunday she is locked into her bedroom without morphia but with enough sleeping tablets for her to kill herself.

predatory female doctor's ruthless treatment of the patients who depend on her for drugs. The freedom of the individual is protected by laws, but the laws are ineffectual. The representative of liberal values is the sports reporter, Robert Krohn (Hilmar Thate) who discovers that Dr Katz (Annemarie Düringer) is using her power to ensnare patients into making their property over to her in return for supplies of morphia, and he tries, unsuccessfully, to expose her.

Two of her victims are former inmates of Treblinka. As in *In a Year with 13 Moons*, Fassbinder drags in the theme of concentration camps without quite managing to integrate it; the camps merely have a generalised thematic relevance to the period in which Veronika Voss established her reputation. As a piece of cinematic storytelling, the film is extremely effective, but the structure is flawed by Fassbinder's habit of distributing punishments and compensations. He wants to set up a memorial to both victims of the camps and to those who prospered, like Veronika, under the Nazis, but find it hard to survive in the German Federal Republic. Sybille Schmitz, Fassbinder's acknowledged model for Veronika, killed herself in 1953 mainly because rejection by the public and the film industry was intolerable; Veronika dies because the sinister doctor cuts off the supply of the drug.

Fassbinder's indictment of contemporary German society hinges in this film on the corruption of the official in charge of narcotics investigations. Working as quickly as he did, and cantilevering uncritically outwards from personal experience, Fassbinder tried to make drug-trafficking serve as an analogue for capitalistic commerce. The refrain of the song he uses on the soundtrack is: 'I owe my soul to the company store.' The drug-pushers are dependent on American suppliers, and, thanks to the corrupt official, the journalist cannot succeed in bringing the vicious doctor to justice, although she not only causes the suicide of Veronika and the old couple, but murders the journalist's girlfriend, who, rather improbably, rings him up from a telephone box within sight of the doctor's flat after posing as a potential patient.

Where the film fails is in giving its plot the resonance and the social relevance Fassbinder intends; the disadvantage of using Sirkian plots is that cliché is admitted, and generalised arguments remain unexamined. Where the film brilliantly succeeds is in dramatising the suffering of an ageing, lonely addict. In his thirty-seventh year, Fassbinder was aware of ageing rapidly – he already looked like a man in his middle fifties – and many of the people he had loved most were either dead or estranged. Just as he had succeeded, ten years earlier, in projecting his own terror of solitude into Petra von Kant, he incorporated it now in the figure of Veronika Voss, and helped Rosel Zech to an outstanding performance. His temperament, she says, corresponded to hers, and she thought of him as an elder brother. Never had she met anyone who seemed to her so warm, so lively, so attentive to each detail of her performance. 'He was giving something away all the time, and that's very rare. You simply felt loved and cherished. He protected me.'

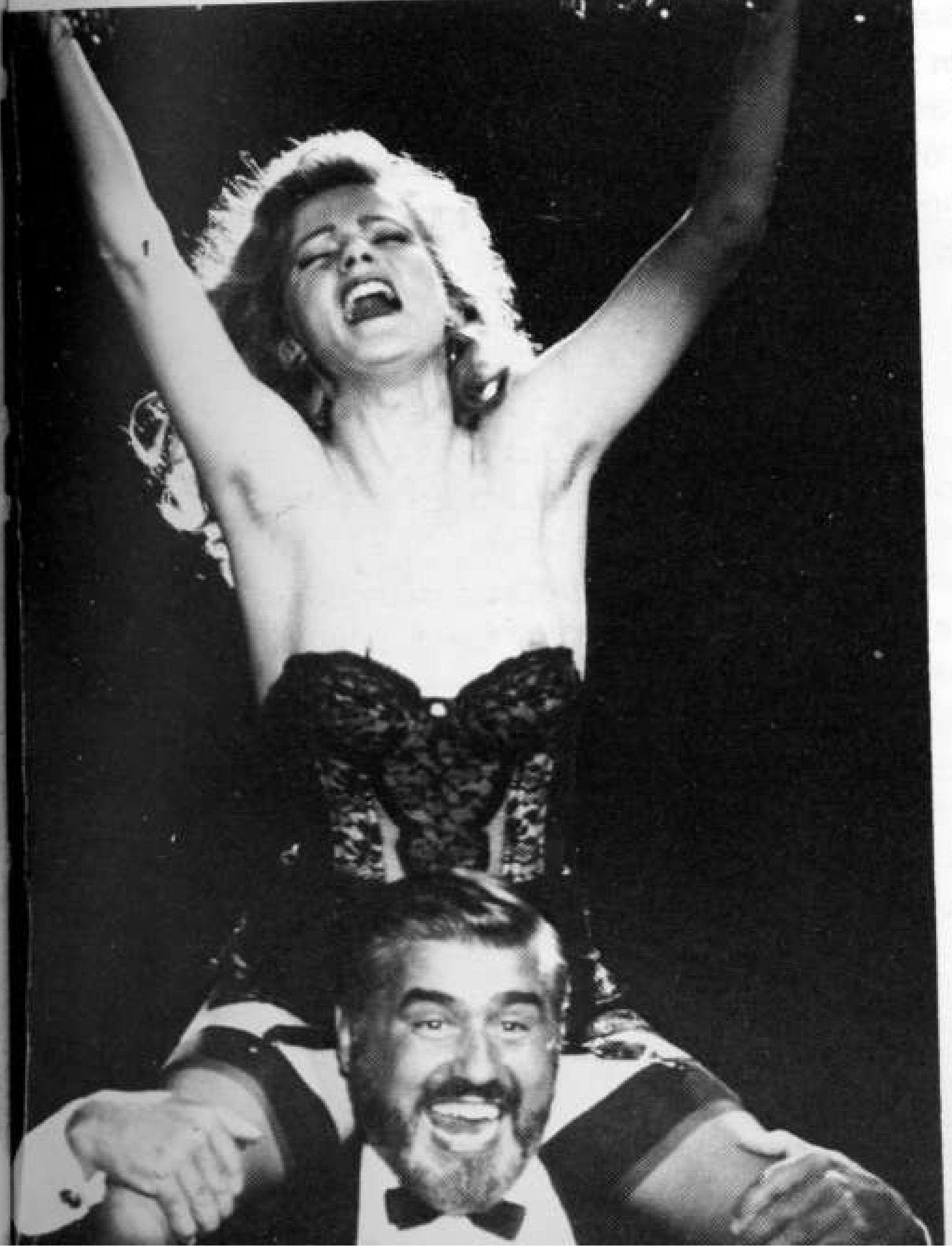
In the black-and-white he boldly chose, he created a number of film images that set up reverberations in the memory of the filmgoer. He had often used light filtered through Venetian blinds, but never to better effect than here, and the song Veronika sings, 'Memories are made of this', encourages us to remember Hollywood films and UFA films of the forties. The scenes inside the doctor's surgery are deliberately over-lit, and the sequence in which Veronika watches one of her old films is more richly suggestive than the sequences in which Margot looks at her frightened face in the mirror. In the cinema sequence we recognise the man sitting behind Veronika as Fassbinder; no other director since Hitchcock had made his face so familiar by playing small parts in his own films.

Lola

Though *Lola* is on the whole a less powerful film, it succeeds better in articulating the theme of corruption in contemporary German society. It is a variant on the story of Heinrich Mann's 1905 novel *Professon Unrat*, which had been adapted for Joseph von Sternberg's 1930 film *The Blue Angel*. *The Marriage of Maria Braun* had been the first part of what Fassbinder called his 'Entire History of the German Federal Republic', and *Veronika Voss* formed the second part. Several further instalments were planned and *Lola*, which was shot seven months before *Veronika Voss*, was announced as the third part. It is set in the fifties, but part of Fassbinder's point is that the power structures created during the Economic Miracle under Adenauer have not yet been destroyed.

A variation on his old theme of the outsider and the group is developed in the story of a man who arrives in Coburg, a suburban town in northern Bavaria, to take up his appointment as Building Commissioner. Von Bohm (Armin Müller-Stahl) appears to be an honourable man and appears to have a good chance of winning his battle against corruption. His arch-enemy is the rich, genial property-developer Schuckert (Mario Adorf), who has previously encountered no municipal resistance to his profitable projects. In practice most of the key decisions have been taken not in the offices of the town hall

Above: Barbara Sukowa as Lola and Armin Müller-Stahl as von Bohm, the hopelessly infatuated Building Commissioner in the 1981 film *Lola*.



Left: Barbara Sukowa and Mario Adorf (Schuckert) at the Villa Fink in *Lola*.

but in the Villa Fink, a sumptuous brothel owned by Schuckert. Von Bohm, though unaware of its existence, meets its star attraction, Lola (Barbara Sukowa), or Marie-Louise as she called herself when she meets him. She is living a double life and, knowing only the respectable half of it, he falls in love with her. When his assistant Esslin, a young idealist who reads Bakunin, takes him to the Villa Fink, he sees the other half. This produces violence of the kind that would have constituted the final climax in an early Fassbinder film: von Bohm goes berserk. But by now Fassbinder was more interested in showing how society ingested dissident elements. The audience is disappointed to find that von Bohm's sexual drives are stronger than his sense of responsibility to the democratic system which has given him power. The film makes its main statement through the irony of the ending, which brings all the characters what they most want. Schuckert is allowed to go ahead with the project von Bohm had opposed. Lola marries the official and receives, as a generous wedding present from Schuckert, the Villa Fink. Nothing has been lost, except von Bohm's integrity, together with his hopes of being the only man to enjoy Lola. The outsider has been cheerfully integrated into the group. Fassbinder was possibly influenced by Raoul Walsh's 1957 film *Band of Angels*, which he described as 'one of the loveliest films I've ever seen'. Sidney Poitier plays the faithful servant of a slave trader (Clark Gable) who had bought the daughter of a farmer and a black woman – a girl who looks purely white. The Civil War breaks out and in the apparently happy ending, the servant, who is fighting on the other side, helps his master to escape with the girl. As Fassbinder said, 'A good director can contrive a happy ending that leaves you dissatisfied. You know that something is wrong – it just can't end that way.'

The Marriage of Maria Braun

In *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, as in *Lola* and *Lili Marleen*, the story centres on relationships between individual men and women, but the statement is a general statement about German society. At the end of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* the point of featuring the football commentary is that Germany is winning the world championship for the first time since the war. It might seem as though this should have had nothing to do with whether or not the Germans regard themselves as a defeated people, but to Fassbinder, who since boyhood had cared passionately about football, the victory marked the end of an epoch, which was also an epoch of female domination. Maria Braun had survived successfully while Hermann, her husband, was in prison. She

Wer kennt
HERMANN
BRAUN ?
Letzte Nachricht aus
dem Raum Smolensk
Fp. Nr. 16310-342

Above: Amid the rubble created by the Allied raids, the wives of German soldiers search at the end of the war for their missing husbands. Hanna Schygulla (*right*) as Maria Braun.
Below: The missing husband returns unexpectedly. Hermann Braun (Klaus Lowitsch) finds Maria with a coloured American soldier, Bill (George Byrd).

From success to drunken depression. Like Fassbinder, Maria makes enough money to have everything she wants – except love.

has made herself indispensable to Oswald, her boss, and in spite of being his mistress, has effectively kept the upper hand in the relationship. In the world of Fassbinder's films, her independence is at the opposite pole from the slavery of Marlene in *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*. But Maria does not free herself from the power of love, and, according to Fassbinder, 'Love is the best, most insidious, most effective instrument of social repression.' While her husband is in prison, she is, in effect, free, and her freedom continues after his release, when, instead of rejoining her, he emigrates to Canada. It is only when he returns to her, after Oswald's death, that she learns how she has been outmanoeuvred, caught up, without realising it, in the masculine world. Behind her back, the two men have entered into an agreement: Hermann will keep out of the way for the rest of Oswald's life. He is rewarded with half of Oswald's estate. Like Wilkie in *Lili Marleen*, she achieves a high degree of success by concentrating on her career, but gravely miscalculates the extent to which she can rely on the man she loves.

In the script the story ends with two deaths which are not accidental. After making herself as beautiful as she can in her best dress, Maria gets into the car with her husband and crashes it. But Fassbinder, who seldom let arguments with actors push him into textual changes, did, for once, make a major concession. Hanna Schygulla maintained that it was not necessary for Maria to die. Fassbinder insisted that it was. She has based her life on a fantasy. Since Hermann's decision to take the blame for her murder of the black G.I., she has felt more committed to him than he has to her, and she has consistently been working towards a future which cannot exist. According to Schygulla, Maria could survive even this setback: 'If she has gone so far and taken so many steps, she can take one more. She can just start from scratch. That happens to everybody.'[3] It was after this argument that Fassbinder came up with the ambiguous ending. We see her light a cigarette by turning on the gas of the kitchen stove – an action that was more characteristic of Fassbinder than of the well organised Maria – and we can make up our own mind about whether she leaves the gas on deliberately. The fatal explosion ties in quite neatly with the beginning of the film, in which the marriage of Maria Braun took place hastily among the explosions of 1943, when buildings were collapsing under attack from enemy bombers. Ironically the voice of the sports commentator continues on the radio after the luxurious house has been destroyed. The triumphant male voice proclaims that Germany has won. The Germans are champions. We then see on the screen the faces of all the post-war Chancellors except Willy Brandt – Adenauer, Erhard, Kiesinger, Schmidt. Having heard Adenauer making nonsense of his own earlier promise that there will be no German rearmament, we can hardly walk out of the cinema without thinking of the final explosion in a context that is not merely personal. Nevertheless, the modulation into the political key is rather facile.

6 Franz Biberkopf and Querelle

Fassbinder first read Alexander Döblin's novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* when he was fourteen or fifteen. With few exceptions, books made little impact on him, and this one, at first, bored him, but he read on, and, looking back about twenty years later on the experience, he claimed that if he had thrown the book aside, his life would have been different 'in several perhaps decisive respects from what it was with Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* in my head, in my flesh, in my whole body and soul'. He interpreted the novel as the story of two men 'whose bit of love on this earth gets smashed. They have no chance to muster the courage to acknowledge and must therefore deny it is possible that in a strange way they like each other, somehow love each other, that something hidden joins them more strongly together than is normally admissible between men'. But what use is this love that cannot bear visible fruit? His first reading of the book 'released my tormenting anxieties which were almost crippling me, the fear, given my homosexual yearnings, to give way to my repressed needs. This reading helped me not to become completely ill, mendacious, desperate, helped me not to break down.' Döblin's influence entered so deeply into his bloodstream that when he re-read the novel at the age of about nineteen, he 'felt almost as though I had to shut my ears and my eyes as it became clearer and clearer that an enormous part of myself, my behaviour, my reactions, a great deal that I had believed to be me, myself, was nothing other than what Döblin had described in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. I had quite simply, without realising it, made Döblin's fantasy into my life.'[1]

Like Fassbinder's father, Döblin was a doctor who had his practice in the slums of a big city. Like James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* had been published in 1922, Döblin was trying to reproduce the flavour and the texture of city life, but by temperament he was more anti-literary than Joyce; his style is chatty, informal, his language colloquial, racy. In trying to free painting from traditional materials and techniques, collage artists had developed a device first used by the Cubists, who pasted pieces of newspaper into their pictures, humorously questioning the triangular relationship between the work of art, the object and the world outside. Kurt Schwitters, whose work had been well known in Berlin since his exhibition at the Sturm gallery in 1918, based his collages on the detritus of urban living, incorporating rubbish picked up in the street – used bus-tickets, scraps of metal, hair, torn paper. Döblin approximated as closely as a novelist could to this technique, interpolating into his narrative scraps from sentences that might be running through the consciousness of people in the city – fragments from popular songs, advertising slogans, sports reports, stock exchange results. Fragmented quotations from the Bible rub shoulders with statistics and reiterated proverbs, while his prostitutes, gangsters, slaughterhouses are close to his direct experience of the real thing.

Filming *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. Günter Lamprecht (centre) plays Franz Biberkopf.

The novel, which was written between 1927 and 1929, harshly depicts the depression that made it so hard to survive in Berlin during 1928. Like Fassbinder, Döblin saw the pimp-prostitute interdependence as a relationship that was normal, not exceptional. Discharged from prison after serving four years for killing the girl who was prostituting herself for him, Franz Biberkopf, a former transport-worker, promises a girl that he will go straight, takes a series of uncomfortable and undignified jobs – sells tie-racks in the street, hawks shoelaces from house to house, sells books on sex, and, wearing a swastika armband, sells the Nazi Party's newspaper, *Der Völkische Beobachter*. An individualist and a socialist, Döblin was trying to give an objective account of the economic crisis as it affected the day-to-day existence of vulnerable individuals who had to earn enough money to eat and pay rent.

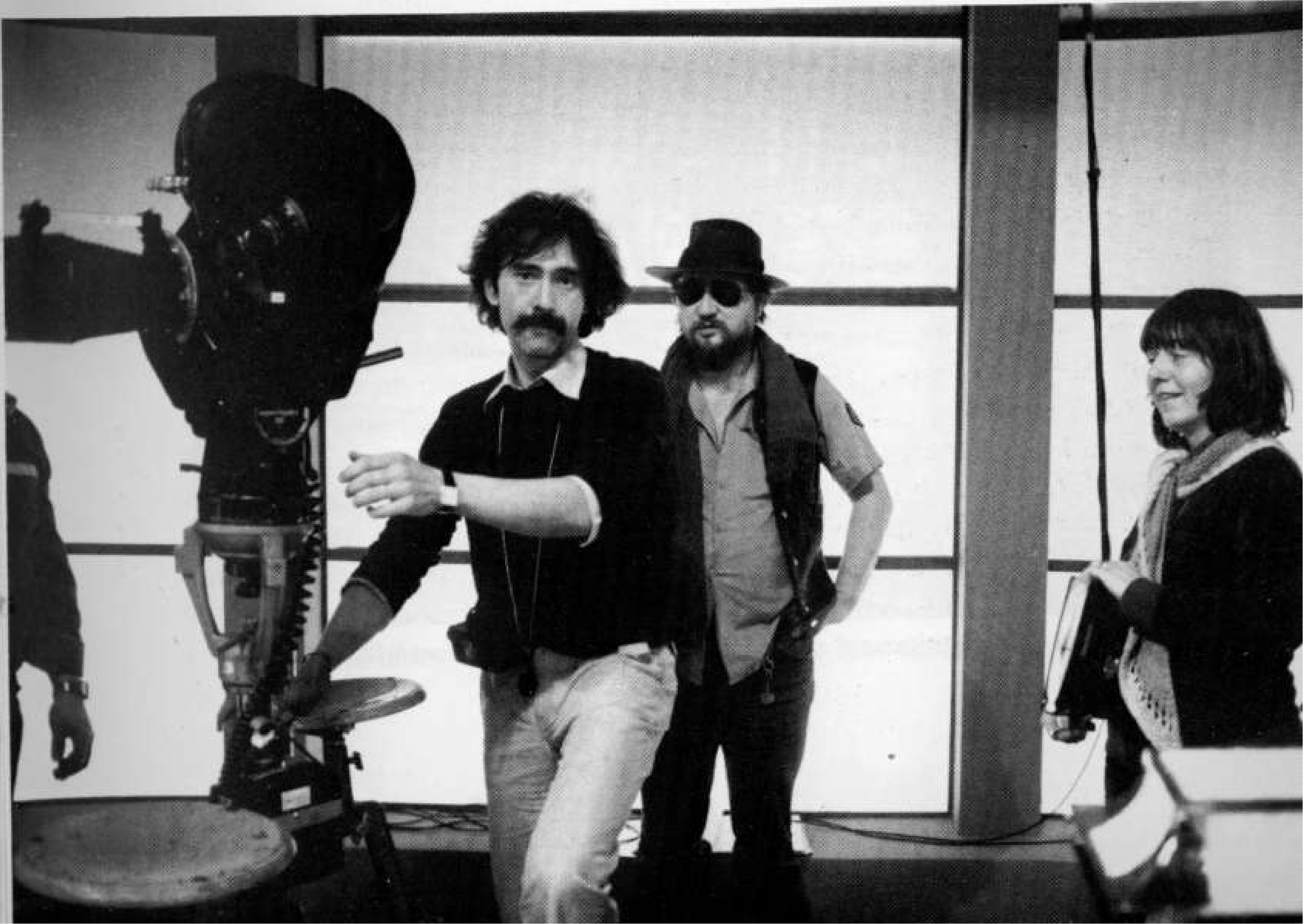
What fascinated Fassbinder was the account of Franz's relationship with Reinhold. Initially the friendship between the two men revolves around the favour Franz does in taking first one woman off his hands and then another. But when Reinhold asks Franz to get rid of the second so that he can take over the third, the good-natured Franz baulks. As Fassbinder puts it in his summary of the plot, 'Reinhold should learn to stay longer with one woman, because that's the healthy way, and the other is sick, and because Franz wants to help Reinhold, and in the right way.' Franz will be savagely punished for having a conventionally moral idea – inconsistent with his experience as a pimp – of what healthy relationships are. If he has previously been primarily a victim of social and economic forces, he now becomes a victim of Reinhold's malevolence. When Franz, without knowing what he's doing, gets involved with a bunch of gangsters, Reinhold pushes him out of a moving car so that the car behind runs over him, and he loses his right arm. He still has no grudge against Reinhold, who now tries to convince the gang that Franz ought to be finished off, and when the others, instead, collect money for him, Reinhold contributes nothing. After the one-armed Franz has slipped first into acting as a fence and then into living on the immoral earnings of the young girl who loves him, Mieze, Reinhold rapes and kills the girl. Even now, Franz feels no hatred towards Reinhold: 'It doesn't make me angry with him, the man's got to learn something.'

Döblin, who was a friend of Brecht's, seems to have learnt something from his best short story, 'Bargan Lets It Be', written in 1919. In it, the tough leader of a pirate gang, a man inured to rape, plunder and butchery, becomes fixated on a club-footed traitor and abandons his followers for the sake of this repulsive little man, whose appeal is never explained. 'And it was only because he needed someone to need him that he had attached himself to this outcast, abandoning everything for him, and probably was quite glad that this wasn't a good man that he loved but an evil, greedy child that swallowed him, like a raw egg, at a single gulp.'[2]

Franz is attracted by the way Reinhold needs him to take women off his hands, and it was not only the latent homosexual love that excited the adolescent Fassbinder. He must have glimpsed a possibility of relieving inward tensions by telling stories which refused to resolve themselves in the usual way. One character could go on failing to revenge a series of provocations, and in this way the charm of the provoker could be established without being explained. Another element in the Biberkopf-Reinhold relationship that probably excited Fassbinder is that both men combine childish simplicity with a kind of sophistication. They have both had plenty of experience with women, violence and crime, but possess only a limited ability to learn from it. At the centre of Reinhold is a scared little boy who tries to hit out hard before he can be attacked, while Franz can never overcome the naïve expectation that people want to behave decently.

Fassbinder's second reading of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* helped him, he says, 'not to slip unconsciously into doing something which could, in a slovenly way, be described as "living at second hand"'. Most people, defeated by their parents and their education, did no more than that; by making Döblin's

Xaver Schwarzenberger (cameraman), Fassbinder and Renate Leiffer (production assistant), left to right, during the shooting of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1979–80).



Fassbinder preparing a moment of suspense in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.

Filming *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.

fantasy into his life, as he put it, Fassbinder could do something different. He saw the film Piel Jutzi had made of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* in 1931, with Heinrich George as Franz Biberkopf, and found it 'in no way a bad film', though 'book and film have nothing to do with each other'. He decided immediately that one day he would make his own film of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.[3]

After deriving plots for two of his early films (*Love Is Colder than Death* and *Gods of the Plague*) from Döblin's story, and after making frequent use of the name Franz (for his own character in *Love Is Colder than Death* and *The American Soldier*; for Harry Baer's in *Katzelmacher* and *Gods of the Plague*), besides using Franz Walsch as a pseudonym to give himself credits as a film editor, Fassbinder appropriated the whole name Franz Biberkopf for his character in *Fox*.

After making twenty-three films, Fassbinder saw them all in the space of three or four days, and it was only then that he realised how, over a period of ten years, more 'quotations' from Döblin had found their way into his films than he had been aware of putting there. He then re-read the novel, and recognised the extent to which it had determined the way he'd lived and worked. What impressed him now, he said, was not so much the plot as the way Döblin had used material that was banal and unbelievable.[4]

The identification with Döblin's fantasies may, at the same time, have helped Fassbinder to go on regarding himself as a victim. Like the original Franz Biberkopf, the one in *Fox* is naïvely trusting, and he goes on letting himself be exploited. Though the character's background is closer to Armin's than to his own, Fassbinder viewed himself as similarly crippled by emotional deprivation during childhood and endlessly exploited by the actors and technicians who worked for him. He also worked – or overworked – for them: though they did not explicitly ask him to keep them permanently employed, the pressure he subjectively felt could not have been greater if they had.

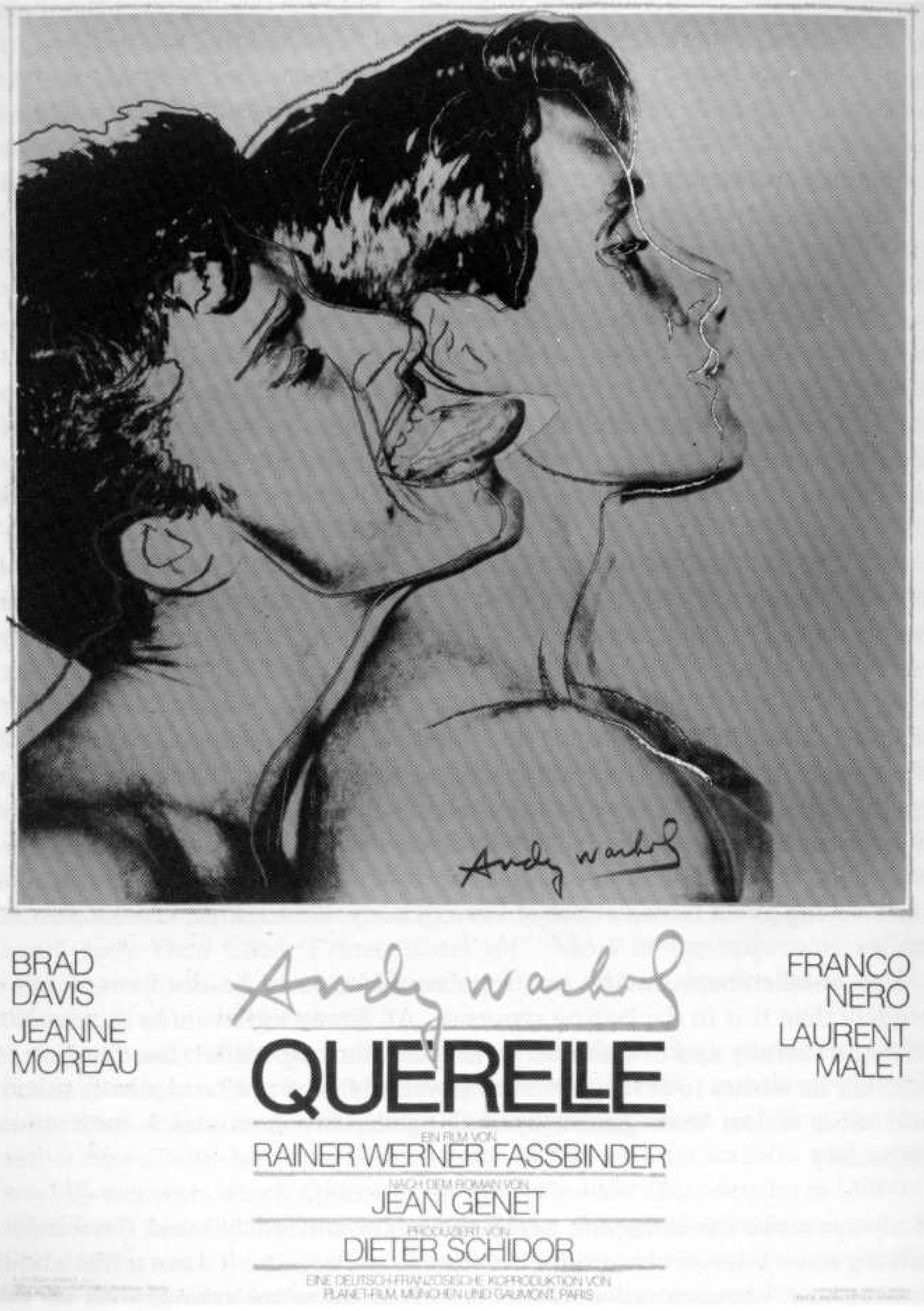
Fassbinder's screenplay for his fifteen-hour version of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* was written while he was living in Paris after the débâcle at Frankfurt. He was ambivalent about returning to Germany, but the need to make the film gave him a strong incentive. Except in the two-hour epilogue, his adaptation of the novel is surprisingly naturalistic. If he was really impressed more by Döblin's way of using banal and melodramatic material than by the plot, it is odd – even though he was designing the film for use on television – that he settled for such a straightforward piece of storytelling, with personal relationships in the foreground and with no serious effort to find a cinematic equivalent to Döblin's literary equivalent to Schwitters's collage. In the novel the behaviour of the individuals is inextricable from life in the slum of the city: Berlin Alexanderplatz is the principal character, whereas Fassbinder's series could have been titled 'Franz Biberkopf'. Most of the sequences are set indoors, and some are set in the underground station, but we see comparatively little of life in the streets.

A good sense of the period is conveyed, mainly through costumes, props, and interiors, but the transition to a different style for the 111-minute epilogue suggests that Fassbinder may have had misgivings about weighing the narrative down with his naturalism. Many of the anti-naturalistic and otherworldly elements which appear in the epilogue have their origins in Döblin's text – even the two angels who protect Franz, though they bulk larger in the film. Unfortunately, much that is implicit or ambiguous in the book is clarified by the epilogue in a heavy-handed way. Döblin had promised to make everything clear through the ending, but this had been little more than a piece of teasing; Fassbinder feels obliged to fulfil the promise, and he gives Reinhold a homosexual experience. In prison under a false identity, charged with a minor offence, he tells his cell-mate, a young man called Konrad, that he loves him. Konrad's answer is: 'That's quite normal in here. Here we all love each other, and out there, everything's quite different, you just forget.' After embracing and kissing the young man, Reinhold explains that he has suffered, all through his life, from being unable to get rid of women, and that 'it's simply the first time that – that I don't understand myself.' Konrad, who is due to be released the next day, takes his clothes off, and before they get into bed together, Reinhold explains to him about the murder of Mieze, providing information which is worse than redundant after Fassbinder's delicate treatment of the murder in the twelfth episode. In the novel all that happens in the cell is that they sit on Reinhold's bed, taking sips from a bottle of distilled alcohol smuggled to them from the carpentry-shop by a polisher. Konrad dissuades Reinhold from trying to escape, and Reinhold offers to give Konrad the address of his girl.

Much of the epilogue seems oddly coarse-grained in comparison with the two final books of Döblin's novel. In a slaughterhouse sequence, twelve naked bodies are heaped together like dead pigs – most of them girls who have been to bed with Franz – while Reinhold stands over them with a hatchet. Later, Franz takes his clothes off to join the mass of bodies. In the novel Döblin makes subtle use of the Berlin slaughterhouses, and this may have helped Fassbinder to develop the image of butchery in other works, but in the epilogue he makes facile equations between human behaviour inside and human behaviour outside the slaughterhouses. In one sequence two henchmen hold Franz while Pums, the leader of the gang, produces a knife and starts trying to cut the heart out of Franz's body. He screams, while Reinhold smiles.

The conflict between the two men could scarcely be dramatised more crudely than it is in the boxing sequence. All Franz's grievances accumulate more powerfully and dramatically when they have no outlet: the question of whether he wishes to revenge himself physically need not be explicitly asked, and more is lost than gained by making the two men attack each other physically.

'I always make the same film again and again, obviously,' said Fassbinder, talking to an interviewer about *Querelle*. 'In my opinion it's not a film about murder and homosexuality. It's a film about someone trying, with all the means that are possible in this society, to find his identity . . . And in order to

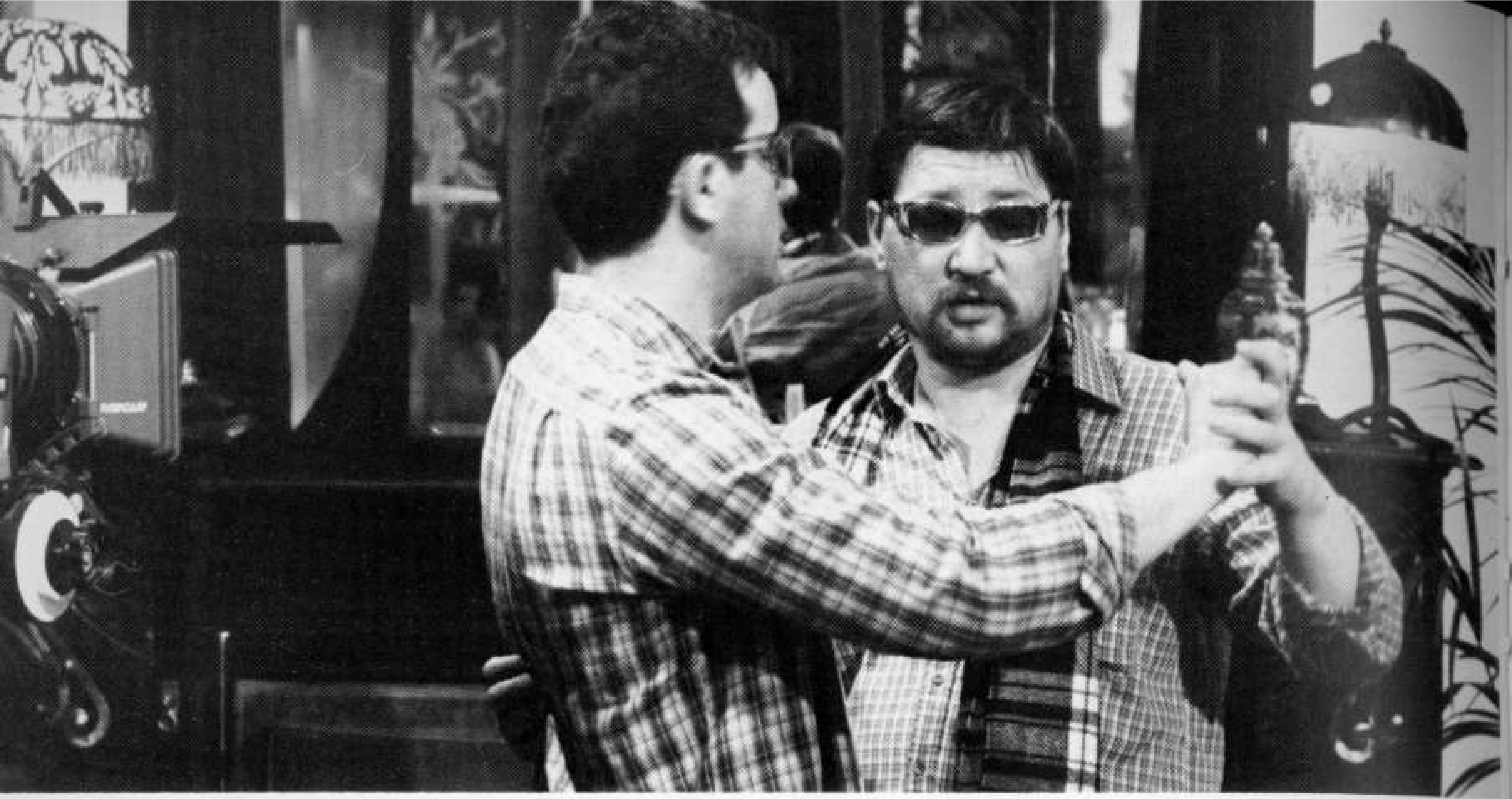


Querelle poster by Andy Warhol.

become identical with himself, Querelle has to see everything he does from two sides. From what society calls the criminal side, or from below, and, because that's no use, he has to mystify other people. That's the only means Querelle has of making headway.'[5] This phrase 'to become identical with himself' also occurs in Fassbinder's preface to the published filmscript: 'Only the man who is really identical with himself can be free from fear of fear ('Angst . . . vor der Angst').'[6] It is easy to underestimate the extent to which Fassbinder's work in film was a quest for identity with himself.

To empathise, as Fassbinder did, with Genet's criminal sailor is to empathise with a man who has to confront the question of whether he is monstrous: 'Querelle was not getting used to the idea, which was never formulated, of being a monster. He considered, regarded his past with an ironic smile, frightened and tender at the same time, in so far as this past merged with himself.' Genet goes on, in a tortuous sentence, to equate the trail of crimes with the cumbersome, armoured body of an alligator: 'A young boy, whose soul is visible in his eyes, metamorphosed into an alligator, if he is not quite conscious of his mouth, of his enormous jaw, would thus consider his fissured body, his gigantic, solemn tail, which beats the water or the beach or brushes against other monsters, and which prolongs him with the same moving, sickening – and indescribable – majesty as a princess derives from the imperial train of lace, armorial bearings, battles and crimes.'[7] This sentence is simplified in Fassbinder's narrative to: 'He was a boy whose soul had changed into an alligator.'

Fassbinder is aware of the crucial imbalance in Genet's novel between the crude, thriller-like plot and the wayward, luxuriant, leisurely, subtly self-intoxicated prose. 'Jean Genet's *Querelle de Brest* is perhaps the most radical novel in world literature so far as the discrepancy between objective action and subjective fantasy is concerned. Separated from Jean Genet's world of images, the outward events produce an uninteresting, rather third-class crime story, and it is scarcely worthwhile to become involved with it.'[8] As with *Effi Briest*, whose full title is *Fontane Effi Briest*, he had intended to include Genet's name in the title of the film, but it does not succeed so well as *Effi Briest* either as an act of homage or as an adaptation of a story. In both films, as in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Fassbinder was setting himself an impossible task in trying to reproduce the tone of the prose and in trying to leave the audience as free as the reader to form his own impressions of the characters. Like Brecht, who had a great, though indirect, influence on him, Fassbinder wanted to make the spectator more critical: this is why both films frequently fade into white. 'According to (Siegfried) Kracauer, when it gets black, the

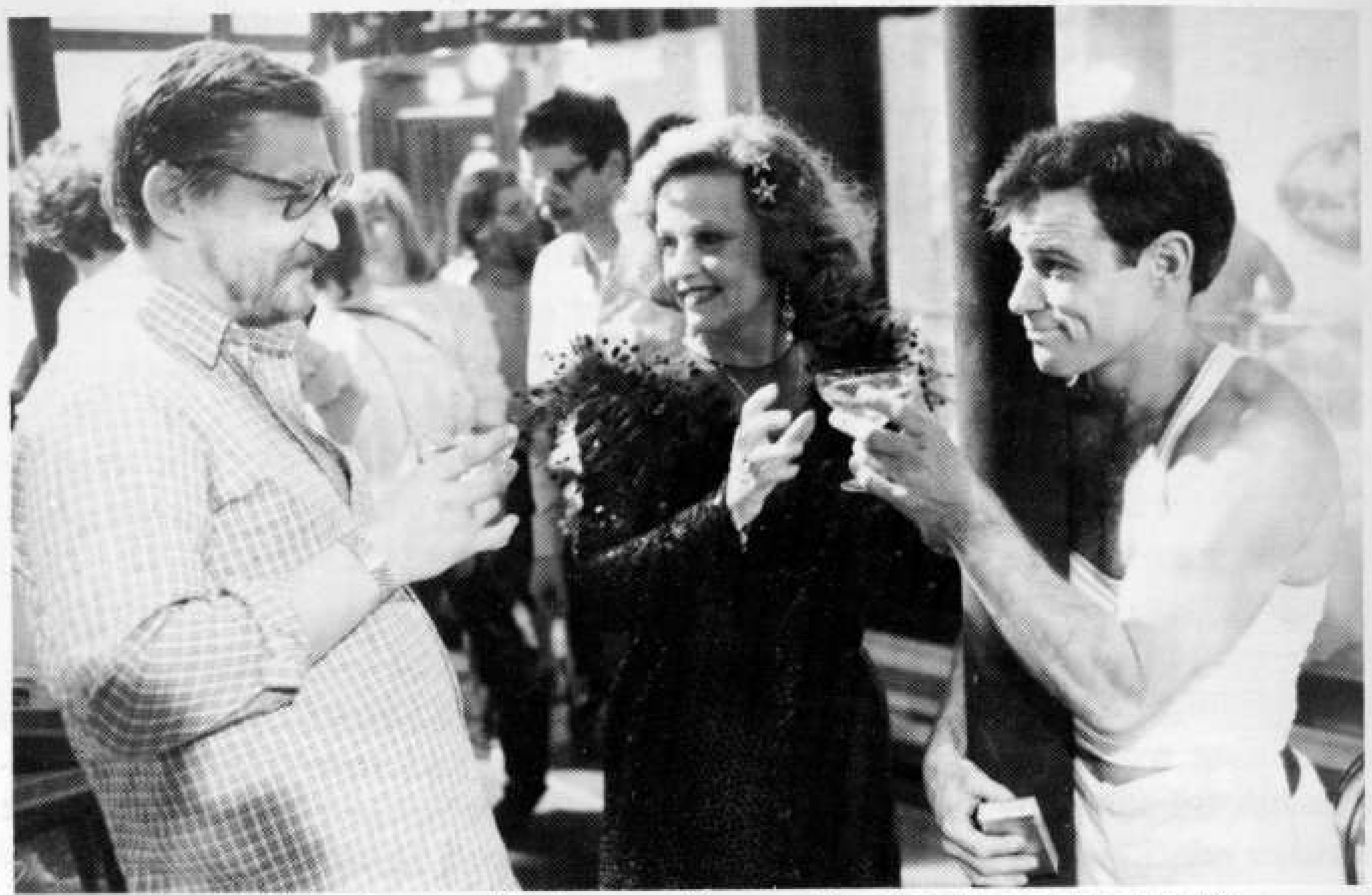


Above: Fassbinder dances a tango with Harry Baer during a camera rehearsal for *Querelle* in Berlin (March 1982).
Below: Fassbinder demonstrates the art of embracing on Hanno Pöschl, playing the double role of Querelle's brother Robert and the murderer Gil.

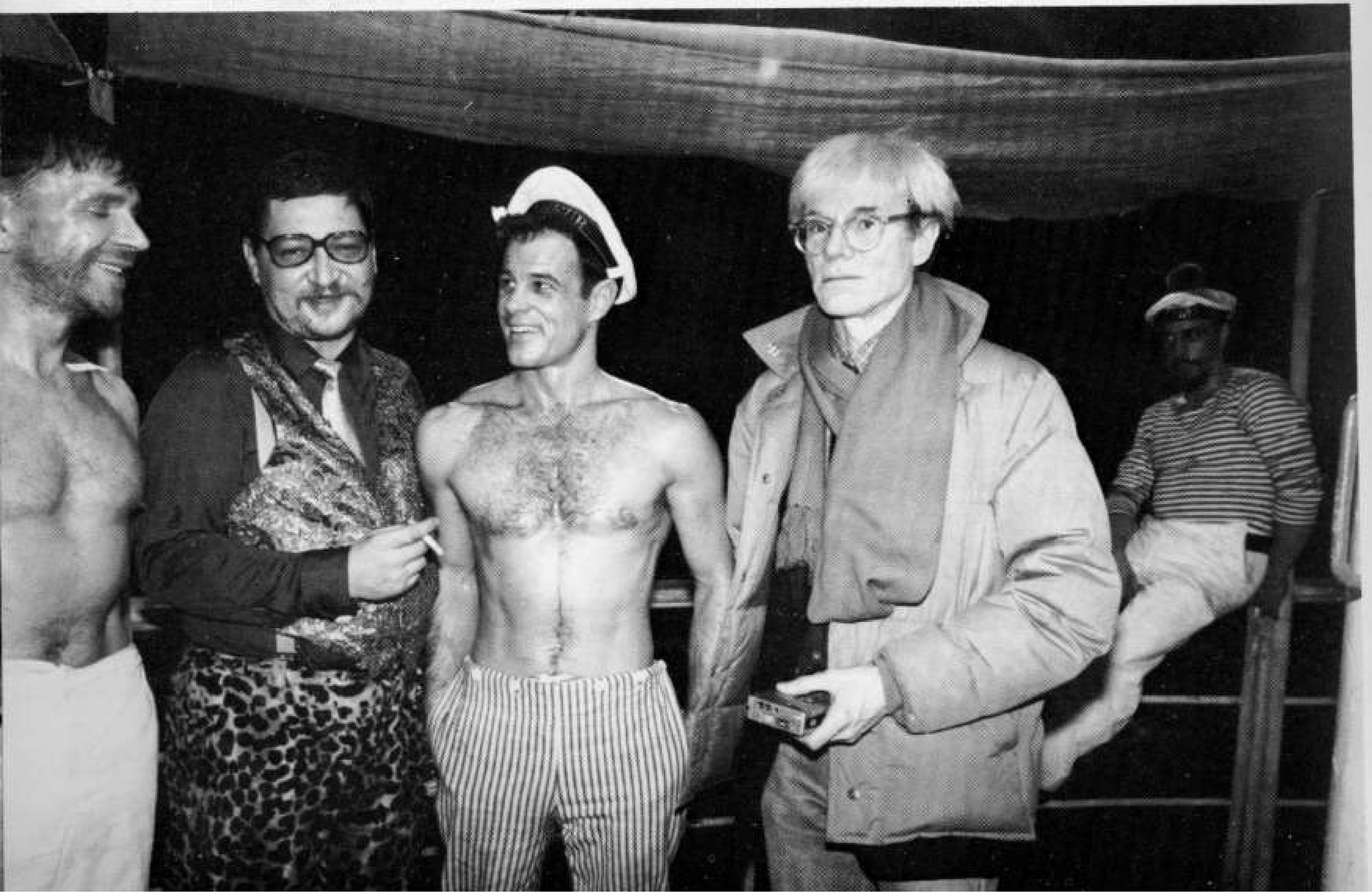
audience starts to fantasise, to dream, and I wanted the opposite effect, through the white. I wanted to make them awake. It (*Effi Briest*) shouldn't function, like most films, through the unconscious, but through the consciousness ... When you read a book, a novel, you imagine your own characters. That's just what I wanted to do in this film.' And in his foreword to the script of *Querelle* he argued that the film-maker who uses literature should not translate one medium into another. 'Filmic concern with a literary work should therefore not set itself the task of giving the maximum realisation to the pictures which literature brings into existence for the reader.'[9] With this end in view, Fassbinder gives a huge proportion of the dialogue to the narrator, who has far more to say than any of the characters. But while this slows the tempo and reduces their apparent freedom of action, it does not reinstate Genet's control over the way in which the violence is introduced.

Structurally the plot pivots on the contrast between two murders. Querelle, who is smuggling opium, cuts the throat of his accomplice, Vic; Gil kills Theo, a building worker who has designs on his sister and tries to contact her through Gil, insulting the boy's masculinity at the same time. In the novel the brother relationship is crucially important. Querelle's brother, Robert, bears a strong resemblance to him, and they have something of the quasi-telepathic rapport that is often found in twins. When they fight, Querelle feels almost as though he is fighting with himself. Fassbinder believed that a brother could be of great help to a man questing for his own identity, and it was a matter of profound regret to him that he had no brother of his own. In the film, instead of aiming for a strong resemblance between the brothers, he cast two dissimilar actors, just as he had in his 1977 film *Despair*. In Nabokov's novel it's not clear whether the characters look alike, and Tom Stoppard, who wrote the screenplay, wanted the same actor to play both roles. In *Querelle* Fassbinder has his own way of developing the subterranean relationship between the two brothers. The actor Hanno Pöschl is cast as both Robert and Gil. This is rather confusing for the audience, but Fassbinder is trying to make the point that in lovingly befriending Gil, and then betraying him to the police, Querelle is acting out a love-hate relationship with his brother.

Though Fassbinder could not quite feel with *Querelle*, as he did with *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, that he had made the author's fantasies into his life, he could see himself reflected both in Genet's book and in Genet's transformation of himself into a myth. In deliberately making himself into a monster, Genet had also made himself into a saint who could attract a band of worshippers headed by Jean-Paul Sartre. As a child Genet had accepted the imputation of wickedness. Excommunicated from the society of good citizens, condemned



Above: Fassbinder relaxes with Jeanne Moreau (Lysiane) and Brad Davis (Querelle), during the shooting of Fassbinder's last film, *Querelle*, in March 1982.
Below: Dieter Schidor (Vic), Fassbinder, Brad Davis and Andy Warhol on the set of *Querelle*.



by the discovery that he was a thief, Genet had plunged, like an alligator, into the negative side of his own being. He had been liberated from the need to resist temptations, and the only price he had to pay for his freedom was degradation. 'I decided to be what crime made of me.'

In childhood fantasies, encouraged by cinema-going, Fassbinder had identified with gangsters, and this tendency continues into his gangster films and into the Brechtian impulse in his more sophisticated films, to depict society's institutions as riddled with criminality and to expose marriage as a form of prostitution. 'Everything,' he said, 'must be recognised as criminal.' Unlike Genet, Fassbinder took few criminal risks, but like an actor, who realises himself by making himself into an object for other people's observation, Fassbinder was recreating his identity by laying it out for inspection in films. Writing about Genet, Sartre uses the word 'pre-pederastic' for the self-realisation that bases itself on being an object for other people. This, according to Sartre, is more female than male, and Fassbinder's drive to become identical with himself had, like Genet's, a great deal of exhibitionism in it. As R. D. Laing has written, 'The exhibitionist who shows off his body, or a part of the body, or some highly prized function or skill, may be despairingly trying to overcome that isolation and loneliness which tend to haunt the man who feels his "real" or "true" self has never been disclosed to, and/or confirmed by others.'[10]

Like Genet, Querelle acknowledges his nature as a monster, but unlike Genet, he is beautiful, a man whose presence is irresistibly attractive to other men. In *Our Lady of the Flowers*, Divine says to Gabriel: 'You are myself' – this corresponds to Genet's earliest memory of loving – he wanted to *be* the good-looking boy who passed by. In *Querelle* Lieutenant Seblon would like to be the sailor; he fantasises about tearing off Querelle's genitals and grafting them on to himself. Fassbinder could identify imaginatively with this penis envy and with Seblon's insatiable desire for degradation at Querelle's hands. Querelle too wants degradation, though not at Seblon's. After murdering Vic he deliberately loses the game of dice with Nono, which means that he will have to let Lysiane's husband (Günther Kaufmann) bugger him. Querelle is surprised that Nono causes him so little pain. 'He was filled with gentle tenderness towards his executioner.' (This time the sentence in Fassbinder's narrative corresponds exactly to Genet's).

Fassbinder used to say that when he based films on books, they were books he could have written himself. Though he could not have written *Querelle de Brest* as Genet wrote it, the film is closer than his versions of Fontane and Döblin to one he might have made without any help from a book.

Fassbinder in May 1977 while he was directing *Despair*.

7 The Statement and the Self

Fassbinder's next film after *Querelle* was to have been *I'm the Happiness of This Earth*, a story about three men (Hanno Pöschl, Harry Baer and Günther Kaufmann) who turn successfully to rock music after unsuccessfully running a detective agency. Fassbinder was going to be his own cameraman, and shooting was due to start on 20 June 1982. A lot of the action was to take place in a discotheque, and on 9 June Harry Baer found a suitable one near Peer Raben's flat in Einsteinstrasse. Built on two levels, the old 'Song Parnass' was big enough and had the right atmosphere, with a stage and seating that could be restructured. At one o'clock in the morning of 10 June, using the direct line to the red telephone by Fassbinder's bed, Baer rang up to tell him about the place. Fassbinder said he was watching television and video-cassettes and reading in between.[1]

He was living with Juliane Lorenz at 76 Clemensstrasse, in a flat which belonged to the film producer Horst Wendlandt. On that night, Wolf Gremm, director of the film *Kamikaze 1989*, which starred Fassbinder, was staying there. At 3.30 a.m., when Juliane Lorenz arrived home, she heard the noise of the television in Fassbinder's room, but she could not hear him snoring. Though not allowed to go into the room uninvited, she went in, and she found him lying on the bed, dead, a cigarette still between his lips.[2] It was ten days after his thirty-seventh birthday.

June 10 was Corpus Christi Day and in Munich it was extremely hot. Several of Fassbinder's friends, when they were first told the news, took it to be a joke. Thomas Schühly, who was awoken at seven in the morning by a call from Juliane, assumed that Fassbinder was playing a trick to get him out of bed, but when he arrived at the flat, he found police there and a doctor. Because of the religious holiday, the inquest would not be held until the following day. 'Even Fassbinder's just a man,' said one of the policemen to a reporter.[3]

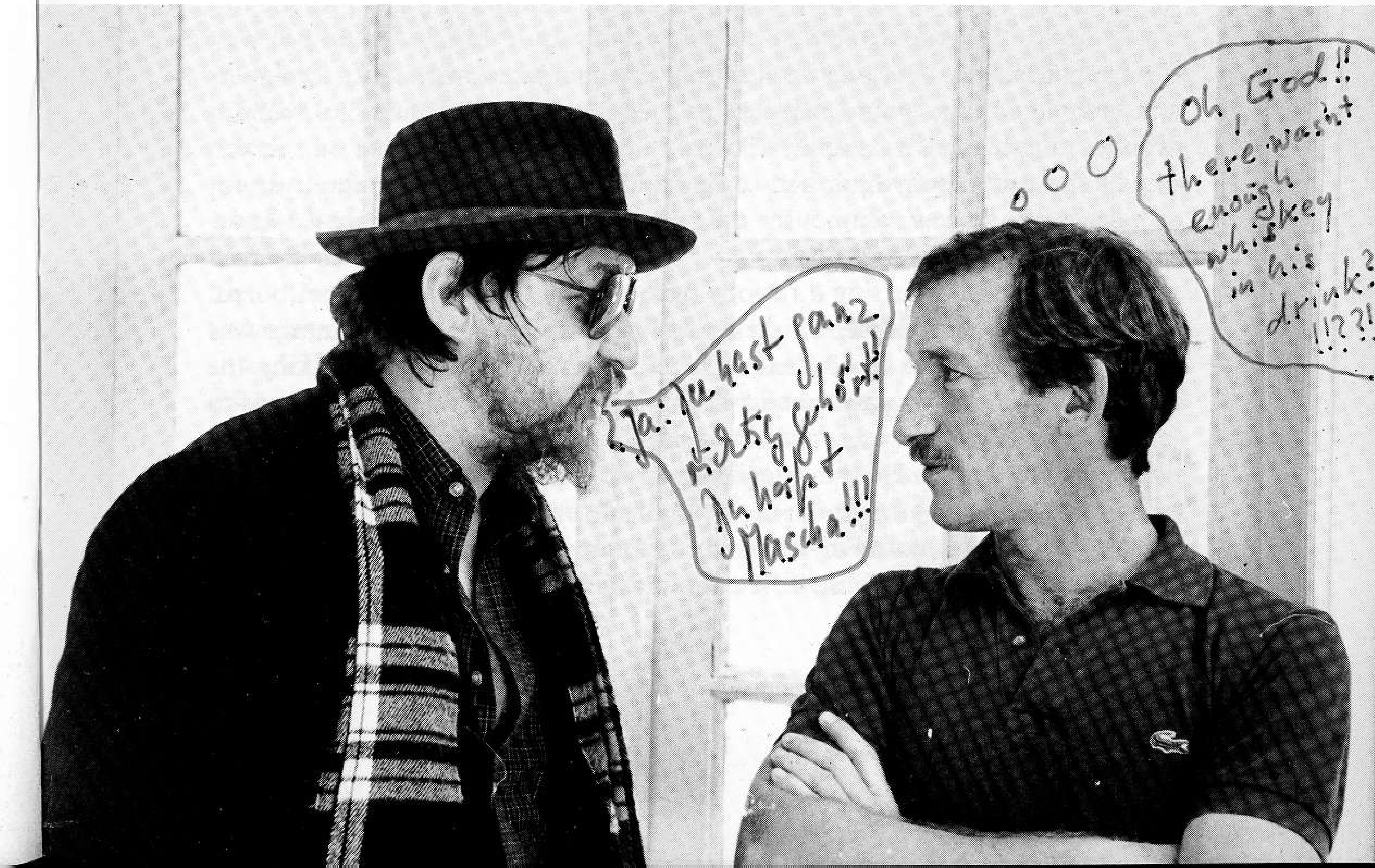
It was soon apparent that his death would be used in many ways. The film *Kamikaze 1989* was still unsold, though it had been completed six months earlier, and by the middle of the day discussion was under way in a Schwabing café, the Extrablatt, between Wolf Gremm, Horst Wendlandt, Dieter Schidor and other film bosses.[4] The premature death was a great event for the news media, and there were several programmes on television in which friends and colleagues reminisced, critics and film-makers gave opinions.

The death, like the death of a young poet, film star or pop singer, gave a new dimension to the legend which had already been started. Many people got the impression that Fassbinder had killed himself, which was true only in so far as his whole way of life had been suicidal. Consistently overworking, overeating, smoking heavily, drinking, taking drugs, sleeping pills and stimulants, he had launched non-stop assaults against his own physique, but never without the irrational hope that it could withstand them. 'If there's an atomic war,' he'd boasted, 'people should stick with me, because if a bomb drops, it won't destroy me. I've got more energy than any bomb.'[5] In some ways he is reminiscent of Sade's villainous heroes, who are divided between contempt for Nature, which is impotent to punish even their most outrageous crimes, and respectful obedience to it, since it implanted their destructive impulses as part of a universal drive towards destruction. As Gilles Deleuze has said, 'Sadism moves from the negative to negation: from the negative as a partial process of destruction, constantly reiterated, to negation as an all-embracing concept of reason.'[6]

The Game Player

If Fassbinder, as a boy, had been intent on behaving obnoxiously to defend himself against the danger of being rebuffed for no apparent reason, he had gone on to become a gambler who would endlessly raise the stakes in the game he was playing against himself, for want of a better opponent. Believing he had never had a childhood, he was a compulsive game player in adult life, but the games he enjoyed most involved a high element of risk. Filming was one he could count on to get him into difficult situations; he could then improvise his way out of them, using his extraordinary faculty for making quick decisions. Everything had to be done at speed. There could be no question of waiting, as most directors must, until the money has been raised for the next project. He would gallop ahead regardless, using his own money, raising credit, starting the shooting without necessarily having enough money to finish it. Having won enough money with *Katzelmacher* to pay for the next low-budget films, he stuck to the same pattern even when the budget was a high one, rushing into production while the idea still excited him.

Above: Fassbinder in drag during the carnival of 1976.
Below: Fassbinder and Michael McLernon with conversation bubbles added by Fassbinder: 'Yes. That's what I said. Your name is Mascha!!!' 'Oh, God!! there wasn't enough whiskey in his drink??!!??!'


Ja: Du hast ganz richtig gehört! Du heißt Mascha!!!
Oh, God!! there wasn't enough whiskey in his drink?!!??!

Filming was itself like a drug: the stimulation mattered more than the finished product. These were 'films for throwing away', he said, 'that's to say films made about a certain subject at a certain time. Afterwards they can be forgotten for all I care.'[7] When a German film producer offered to contract him on a salary equivalent to over £14,000 a month for five years on condition that he did not make more than one film each year, he was not interested. 'What would I do for the rest of the year?'[8] Greedy though he was for money, success, fame, film mattered to him most as a means of giving him the power to express himself and to indulge his moods. After he had created a worldwide sensation with *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, his next step was not calculated to consolidate his international reputation. He made *In a Year with 13 Moons*, which could not possibly have ingratiated him with a mass audience.

When he got bored with working on *Querelle*, he made a sudden decision to cut the shooting schedule short by three days. In the middle of a Saturday afternoon, he told Dieter Schidor he was going to finish the film by midnight. Working mainly from memory, he improvised changes in the script, confusing the cameraman and his assistants. The film had not been shot chronologically, and there was no-one on the set who could follow what he was doing as he shot one sequence after another, dismissing actors as he finished with them. By midnight the film was complete.[9]

No doubt he was temperamentally incapable of working in any other way than he did, but this is to say that he was incapable of making anything but flawed films. What he lacked was patience. If a costume or a prop turned out badly, he would go ahead either with it or without it, but he would not wait for a replacement. Working with the same cameramen, assistants, designers and technicians, he would delegate as many decisions as possible, without even making himself available for consultation. When he arrived on the first day of shooting, everything had to be ready. Often, when he came to shoot on a location, he was seeing it for the first time. 'I can't shoot there if I know the place already.'[10]

The advantage of setting a furious pace was that no-one could get bored, and everyone was under tension, especially the actors. The disadvantage was that there would be a good deal of botching in every phase of making the film, from scripting to post-synchronising. As a writer he was not prepared to take trouble: the only research that found its way into his films was research done by other people. He was unconcerned with what Alfred Hitchcock called icebox thoughts. So long as the movie made its impact on the audience in the cinema, it did not matter if someone, helping himself to a midnight drink from the refrigerator, realised: 'It couldn't have happened like that!' In *Lili Marleen*, for instance, the extras playing the Nazi soldiers are twice directed into defying their officers in a way that is unlikely to have been tolerated in such a disciplined army, but Fassbinder hated discipline and knew that the audience would enjoy seeing the killjoy officers being shouted down.

Dirk Bogarde (*centre*) as Hermann Hermann in *Despair* (1977). His wife Lydia (Andrea Ferréol) is having an affair with her cousin, Ardalion (Volker Spengler), a drunken painter.

The general standard of post-synchronisation in Fassbinder's films is low, not because he wanted an extra alienation effect or a disjunction between the soundtrack and the movements of the actors' lips but because he would not devote time to getting things right. In his early films, where he needed to

'The Gentlemen Invite the Ladies.' Fassbinder with two 'transvestite' friends at a ball in the Deutsches Theater during 1976.

economise with film stock, he could not have afforded to record live sound; later he was less concerned to save money than to save time. But many of his actors were not trained professionals, and it was hard for them to dub accurately, especially when he was urging them on to produce quick results. *Querelle*, the first film he made in English, was dubbed in New York, and he wanted to go there, but after an hour of auditioning actors, he became bored and handed over to the manager of the dubbing studio.[11]

Though his threshold of boredom had always been low, it was affected by the intake of drugs. He tried to rationalise his growing dependence on them. Rimbaud, he maintained, could not have written without marijuana, and Proust needed drugs to write *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Fassbinder seldom took hallucinogenic drugs while shooting, but he would smoke marijuana or hashish on the set, and drink bourbon out of a beer-glass. He was least in need of drugs when he was least bored, but the more drugs he took, the more impatient he became. At the beginning of the eleven months of working on *Berlin Alexanderplatz* he was in good shape, but towards the end he became restless. According to Renate Leiffer, his production assistant, 'He got very nervous about people, and I knew he was taking drugs again. He was saying to nearly everybody: "What you're going is no good."' Drugs would make him still less concerned than usual with accuracy of detail, and he would want 'to do something very awful to make everybody upset. He had to quarrel with somebody. He had guilt feelings he wanted to unload on other people.' He would try, for instance, to drum up impromptu dramas by reporting bitchy conversations, which might never have taken place, in the hope of setting one member of his team against another.[12]

This helps to explain the patchiness of his films. Their best moments are unforgettable – Emmi in *Fear Eats the Soul* inviting her friends to feel her husband's biceps, the silence of Hans Epp in *The Merchant of the Four Seasons* as he drinks himself to death, or the drably dressed women in *The Marriage of Maria Braun* waiting grimly at the railway station among the returning soldiers, the girl in bed with Franz Biberkopf, casually forgiving him for hurting her: 'That's the way it is with me.' 'Oh well, if that's the way it is.' On the other hand, although the films invariably dramatise generalisations about the mechanics of oppression, Fassbinder is remarkably careless about his endings. It is odd that he should let himself be talked into making Maria Braun's death ambiguous, and while no ambiguity is intended at the end of *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, different critics have come to different conclusions about Marlene's reasons for packing her things when Petra offers her a better deal.

Chinese Roulette

The film that most clearly reflects the adult pleasure he took in game playing is *Chinese Roulette*, which centres on a version of the truth game he often played with his friends. The players divide into two teams, which take it in turn to pick out one member of the other side. This side then has to find out who has been picked by asking such questions as 'What kind of animal is the person most like?' It is a game in which players can easily become offensive, and in the film, the game is played at the suggestion of Angela, the crippled daughter, who then plays on the opposite side from her mother. When the mother asks: 'In the Third Reich, what would the person have been?' Angela's answer is 'Commandant of the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen,' and it is her mother she is describing. When Fassbinder played the game, his answers were often no less provocative.

Anna Karina as Irene and Margit Carstensen as Ariane in *Chinese Roulette* (1976). A rich businessman takes his French girlfriend, Irene, to his country retreat, only to find his wife Ariane is there with her lover.

Fassbinder in a relaxed mood.

Fassbinder and the Actors

The level of performance in his films is high, but that is not to say that he always got the best actors or got the best out of the actors that he had. Generally, I suspect, his tendency was to give them too little freedom - he was more interested in controlling than in observing - and his habit of post-synchronising sound gave him even greater control over the actors. Like directors in the days of silent films, he could go on giving instructions to his actors during a take. This technique was effective enough with actors who had been working with him regularly, and it was mostly with these that his films were made; it was only towards the end of his short career that he was beginning to plumb the possibilities of working with such skilful and inventive stars as Jeanne Moreau and Dirk Bogarde, and neither was able to give him as good a performance as they had given other directors. Even Anna Karina had shown under Jean-Luc Godard's direction that she was capable of giving more than Fassbinder was capable of taking from her. In filming her, Godard used to depend a good deal on improvisation and accident, even on the girl's visible restlessness when the camera stayed on her after she had said all she was going to say. Antonioni and Milos Forman have often used the same trick of letting the camera linger. Jeanne Moreau is at her best in films where she appears to be reacting spontaneously in a way which may have surprised the director – controlling a flow of improvisation rather than obeying precise instructions.

Hanna Schygulla has complained that in working with Fassbinder she felt like a puppet operated by remote control, and Ingrid Caven has said: 'I never had the feeling that when Rainer cast a role he was interested in what was there in the person. What interested him was the form, the outward picture and the kind of hysteria that went into self-expression. He cast according to expressiveness and not according to the person's sense of his own identity ... What interested him was to form something, some structure, which he had in his head, which he imagined, and he used us and exploited us.'[13]

This helps to explain why the acting does not contribute as much as it should to the impact of Fassbinder's films. *Lola* has a better script than *The Blue Angel*, but the performances of Sukowa and Armin Mueller-Stahl do not remain in the memory like those of Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings in von Sternberg's film, while generally in Fassbinder's work, the obedient Hanna Schygulla is more effective than Margit Carstensen, an actress with more finesse, a wider emotional range and a more expressive face.

While he was a superb cinematic storyteller, adroit in his handling of dialogue in relation to images, he was not interested in using actors to interpret dialogue. Though he shows in the dialogue he wrote that he had a keen ear for speech patterns, his flair was more visual than verbal. As he said, 'I don't work from dialogue. It would never occur to me to rehearse different emphases. There's nothing I hate more than mimicry. I want to show no more about a situation than occurs to the actor. I prefer him to identify with himself, to remain himself, rather than that I should impose an interpretation on him.'[14] In fact he imposed a great deal on his actors, but not by means of arguments about the interpretation of dialogue. The confidence they almost unanimously felt in him was confidence that he would take decisions on their behalf. 'He carried me through blindly,' reports Margit Carstensen, 'like a baby.' But later on, when she became more interested in the problems of directing, they quarreled, and when he cast her as Nora in *A Doll's House*, he cut all the lines which seemed to her most significant and which she most wanted to discuss. He had decided, unilaterally, to show Nora 'as a woman who understands the means she has to get her own way, to suppress a man. That's what it's about – that the man is the victim.' That is not what Ibsen thought the play was about. In his preliminary notes, written in Rome on 19 October 1878, he wrote: 'A woman cannot be herself in modern society. It is an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from a masculine viewpoint.' Like Brecht, Fassbinder was more interested in a play's bearing on current social issues than in the social context from which it emerged, and antipathy to feminism influenced his interpretation of *A Doll's House* 'The world isn't a case of women against men, but of poor against rich, of repressed against repressors. And there are just as many repressed men as there are repressed women.' He even altered the ending of the play: his Nora did not leave the doll's house. 'You can find the kind of problem that Nora and Helmer had in ten thousand other marriages, and the wife does not usually leave – where would she go? ... People are *not* really free to walk out. It is so hard for people to be alone.' It would have bored Fassbinder to research into Ibsen's experiences and attitudes; instead he reads the play and the character in relation to his own preoccupations and prejudices, adapting it to make it more like a play he might have written himself. Carstensen said: 'I always had the feeling I was there as his representative ... He always behaved as if, when I was acting, I was playing his role.'[14]

Images of Imprisonment

At the same time, Fassbinder, like Ingmar Bergman, took particular pleasure in creating images expressive of imprisonment. Within the frame created by the shape of the screen, he imposed internal frames, using doors and windows to circumscribe the human figure. One reason for the recurrent use of mirrors in his films is that they frame the human image. Fassbinder relies more and more heavily on these internal framing devices in *I Only Want You to Love Me* as Peter becomes more desperate. The director, like the storyteller, identifies similtaneously with executioner and victim, oppressor and oppressed. In showing how Peter's *Angst* increases as his chances dwindle of becoming identical with himself, Fassbinder is controlling the progression of the story towards its catastrophic climax.

The survivors in his films are the characters who make compromises, and one entertaining way in which he could express horror at the consequences was to dress these characters in outrageously constricting clothes. In *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* the blatant nudity of the lifeless mannequins (who themselves function as framing devices) comments ironically on the limitations to the liberty of the characters. Marlene, the most obviously enslaved, is dressed simply in a way that allows her to go about her work, but

Sunlight filtered through a Venetian blind, a characteristic Fassbinder effect, illuminates the face of Peter (Vitus Zeplichal), in *I Only Want You To Love Me*.

Petra, Sidonie and Karin, even when they are trying to relax, sacrifice comfort to elegance, while the bars of the iron bed and the horizontal bars of shadow produced by filtering light through a Venetian blind reinforce the imagery of imprisonment. In some sequences of *Martha*, costumes verge even more closely on the absurd, especially when the corpse of the father is brought back on a train from Italy to Germany. As Martha meets her mother and her sister on the platform of the station, the elaborate, fashionable mourning attire of the women looks ridiculous. Kurt Raab, who as art director for the film was also in charge of costumes, as he had been on *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, intuitively understood the effect Fassbinder wanted to produce.

Fassbinder knew that self-indulgence is self-defeating, but, with Puritanic masochism, continued to practise it. Self-indulgence was the cause for which he finally died as a martyr, but the martyrdom was not ineffectual: it nourished the legend which rests on the dialectic he had discovered between oppression and liberty. Had he not been one of the great oppressors, he would not have been so successful in promoting his passionate statements about liberty.

When we survey his cinematic output, the whole seems greater than the sum of the parts. It's hard to consider each film separately in its own right, and it's hard to watch any of them without remembering (more often than in a film by Buñuel or Bergman) who directed it. He was so successful in creating a Fassbinder legend that it forms the perspective in which we view the films, and the legend was a major part of his achievement. The statements he made about himself and the statements that are contained in anecdotes about him become inseparable from the statements made in the films. He understood that their reception would depend partly on his image, and one reason for behaving outrageously was that outrage would promote them. He needed the legend, and he sacrificed himself to it.

At Fassbinder's funeral in June 1982. From left to right under the umbrella are Juliane Lorenz, Fassbinder's mother and Rosel Zech.

Notes

1 No Childhood at All

1 *RWF* Reihe Film 2, 3rd ed p 63
2 Limmer p 44
3 *RWF* 4th ed p 95
4 Limmer p 47
5 *RWF* 4th ed p 97
6 3rd ed p 63
7 Limmer p 47
8 pp 47–8
9 Interview with Maria Saekel-Jelkmann 9.2.84
10 Limmer p 52
11 Saekel-Jelkmann
12 *RWF* 4th ed p 96
13 Saekel-Jelkmann
14 interview in *Interview* (ed Andy Warhol) Vol 10 no 9
15 Saekel-Jelkmann
16 Limmer p 51
17 Saekel-Jelkmann
18 interview with Liselotte Eder 11.12.83
19 10.7.83
20 Rayns 2nd ed p 92
21 Liselotte Eder 10.7.83
22 ibid
23 Sartre *Les Mots* Paris, 1964
24 Liselotte Eder 10.7.83
25 Raab p 52
26 Liselotte Eder 11.12.83
27 Saekel-Jelkmann
28 ibid
29 ibid
30 interview with Kurt Raab and Dieter Schidor 10.7.83
31 Liselotte Eder 11.12.83
32 interview with Dieter Schidor 8.12.83
33 Raab p 152
34 Schidor 9.12.83
35 Saekel-Jelkmann
36 *Bergman on Bergman* London 1973 p 18
37 D.W. Winnicott *Playing and Reality* London 1971 pp 73–4
38 Rayns 2nd ed p 94
39 interview with Thomas Schühly 8.7.83
40 Raab pp 59–60
41 Liselotte Eder 10.7.83
42 Rayns 2nd ed pp 103–4
43 Raab p 63
44 pp 59–60
45 p 48
46 Raab and Schidor
47 Raab p 52
48 interview with Renate Leiffer 11.12.83
49 ibid
50 Schidor 9.12.83
51 Raab and Schidor
52 Rayns 2nd ed pp 84–5
53 interview with Irm Hermann in Raab pp 295–8
54 Limmer p 83
55 Irm Hermann in Raab p 302
56 p 301
57 *Frauen im Film* Heft 35
58 Raab p 82 and Irm Hermann in Raab pp 300–5
59 ibid
60 Raab pp 83–4
61 Irm Hermann in Raab p 303
62 Raab p 163
63 Pflaum p 97
64 Raab pp 168–71
65 p 144

2 The Group and the Team

1 *Hanna Schygulla* pp 171–2
2 p 175
3 *Frauen im Film* Heft 35
4 Heide Simon 'Das geniale Monster' in *Theater Heute* Heft 6, 6.83
5 interview with Michael Fengler 9.7.83
6 *Hanna Schygulla* p 174; *RWF* 3rd ed p 67; interview with Peer Raben 11.12.83
7 Rayns 2nd ed p 103
8 *Hanna Schygulla* p 174
9 Raab p 108 and pp 76–8
10 *Hanna Schygulla* p 175
11 Raab pp 78 and 120
12 interviews with Irm Hermann on WDR 6.82 and with Peer Raben in Raab p 101
13 Heide Simon
14 Raab p 102
15 *Hanna Schygulla* pp 181–2
16 Raab and Schidor
17 Richard Roud 'RWF: Biter Bit' *Sight and Sound* autumn 82
18 Raab p 102
19 *Hanna Schygulla* p 182
20 p 184
21 Raab pp 108–9
22 Rayns (2nd ed) pp 103–4
23 jnterview with Peer Raben 11.12.83
24 Eckhardt p 76
25 interview with Peer Raben in Raab pp 93–124
26 p 118
27 Peter Iden in Rayns 1st ed pp 19–20
28 Peer Raben in Raab pp 118–9
29 Limmer p 55
30 p 62
31 p 56
32 *RWF* 3rd ed p 71
33 Raab p 114
34 Pflaum p 139
35 interview with Michael Fengler 9.7.83
36 interview with Ulli Lommel in Benjamin Henrichs 'Müder Wunderknabe' *Die Zeit* 8.6.73
37 interview with Barbara Sukowa 12.7.83
38 Raab and Schidor
39 *Gambit* Nos 39/40
40 *Theater Heute* vol 10, 1970 p 116
41 'Fassbinder' in Marieluise Fleisser 'Alle meine Söhne'
42 Raab p 154
43 ibid
44 p 155
45 Rayns 2nd ed p 107
46 Limmer p 94
47 Rayns 2nd ed p 89
48 *RWF* 4th ed p 114
49 Raab pp 119–20
50 Heide Simon
51 Ibid and Raab p 248
52 interview with Peter Chatel in Raab pp 251–2
53 Pflaum p 141
54 Vsevolod Pudovkin *Film Acting and Film Technique* 1938, London 1948
55 Hayman *Techniques of Acting* London 1969
56 Thomas Schühly
57 Antonin Artaud '*L'Evolution du décor*' quoted in Hayman *Artaud and After* London 1977
59 Pflaum pp 144–5
59 ibid
60 *RWF* 3rd ed p 75

3 Paying for Love

1 Raab p 157
2 Baer p 59
3 p 211
4 Raab p 150
5 p 200
6 pp 209–12
7 interview with Dieter Schidor in *High Times* 8.83
8 Raab pp 218–35
9 pp 312–4, p 253 and p 314
10 Baer p 119
11 Limmer p 95

12 interview with Eva Mattes and Laurens Straub 12.7.83
13 ibid
14 Baer p 145
15 *Der Film Berlin Alexanderplatz* p 569
16 Limmer p 129
17 Raab and Schidor

4 The Necessary Cruelty

1 Renate Leiffer
2 interviews with Barbara Sukowa, Rosel Zech and Eva Mattes, 7.83
3 Schidor 9.12.83
4 Raab pp 185–6
5 *Der Film Berlin Alexanderplatz* pp 567–8 and Baer p 142
6 *Der Film Berlin Alexanderplatz* p 569
7 Limmer p 94
8 interview with Ursula Strätz in Raab p 135
9 interview with Irm Hermann in Raab p 299
10 *Frauen im Film* Heft 35
11 Baer p 51
12 p 40
13 Raab pp 187–8
14 Pflaum p 114
15 p 92
16 Raab p 267
17 p 291
18 *RWF* 4th ed p 107
19 Limmer p 79
20 *Fernsehspiele* WDR Jan–Jul 74 and *RWF* 4th ed p 98
21 Raab and Schidor
22 interview with Burkhard Driest in *RWF dreht Querelle* pp 123–4 and interview with Dieter Schidor in Raab p 341
23 Raab p 170
24 Raab and Schidor

5 Themes and Variations

1 Limmer p 91
2 George Steiner *Language and Silence* Harmondsworth 1969 pp 155–6
3 Rayns 2nd ed p 82
4 *Frauen im Film* Heft 35

6 Franz Biberkopf and Querelle

1 *Der Film Berlin Alexanderplatz* pp 6–7
2 Bertolt Brecht *Prosa* vol 1 p 36
3 *Der Film Berlin Alexanderplatz* p 7
4 ibid
5 *Filmfaust* No 27 1982
6 *Querelle Filmbuch* p 11
7 Genet *Oeuvres complètes* vol III Paris 1953 p 180
8 *Querelle Filmbuch* p 11
9 ibid
10 R.D. Laing *The Self and Others* London 1961

7 The Statement and the Self

1 Baer pp 201–2
2 Raab p 14
3 ibid
4 p 15
5 interview with Dieter Schidor 7.12.83
6 Gilles Deleuze *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* Paris 1967
7 Rayns 2nd ed p 85
8 Schidor 8.12.83
9 Schidor and Raab 10.7.83
10 interview with Renate Leiffer 11.12.83
11 Schidor 9.12.83
12 Leiffer 11.12.83
13 *Frauen im Film* Heft 35
14 interview with RWF in Benjamin Henrichs 'Müder Wunderknabe' *Die Zeit* 8.6.73
15 *Frauen im Film* Heft 35

Filmography

ABBREVIATIONS

RWF = Rainer Werner Fassbinder
A = actors
AC = artistic collaborator
AD = art director
C = cameraman
Co = cost
D = director
d = duration
E = editor
M = music
P = production
PA = production assistant
Pd = producer
S = screenplay
WDR = Westdeutscher Rundfunk (West German Radio)

1965 ***The City Tramp*** (*Der Stadtstreicher*)
S and D – RWF; C – Josef Jung; A – Christoph Roser, Susanne Schimkus, Michael Fengler, Thomas Fengler, Irm Hermann, RWF; P – Roser Film; d – 10 minutes.

1966 ***The Little Chaos*** (*Das kleine Chaos*)
S and D – RWF; C – Michael Fengler; A – Marite Greiselis, Christoph Roser, Lilo Pempeit, RWF; P – Roser Film; d – 12 minutes (cut to 9).

1969 ***Love Is Colder than Death*** (*Liebe ist kälter als der Tod*)
S and D – RWF; C – Dietrich Lohmann; E – Franz Walsch (pseudonym for RWF); AD – Ulli Lommel, RWF; A – Ulli Lommel (Bruno), Hanna Schygulla (Joanna), RWF (Franz Walsch), Hans Hirschmüller (Peter); P – Antiteater-X-Film; Co – ca 95,000 marks; d – 88 minutes.

1969 ***Katzelmacher***
S and D – RWF; C – Dietrich Lohmann; E – Franz Walsch; AD – RWF; M – Peer Raben (after Schubert); A – Hanna Schygulla (Marie), Lilith

Ungerer (Helga), Elga Sorbas (Rosy), Doris Mattes (Gunda), RWF (Jorgos), Rudolf Waldemar Brem (Paul), Hans Hirschmüller (Erich), Harry Baer (Franz); Co - ca. 80,000 marks; d - 88 minutes.

1969 ***Gods of the Plague*** (*Götter der Pest*)
S and D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann; E - Franz Walsch; M - Peer Raben; AD and PA - Kurt Raab; A - Harry Baer (Franz), Hanna Schygulla (Joanna), Margarethe von Trotta (Margarethe), Günther Kaufmann (Günther), Ingrid Caven (Magdalena Fuller); P - Antiteater; Pd - RWF, Michael Fengler; Co - 180,000 marks; d - 91 minutes.

1969 ***Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*** (*Warum läuft Herr R. Amok?*)
S - improvisation; D - Michael Fengler, RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann; E - Franz Walsch; M - 'Geh nicht vorbei' by Christian Anders; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Harry Baer; A - Kurt Raab (Herr R.), Lilith Ungerer (his wife), Amadeus Fengler (their son), Franz Maron (boss), Harry Baer, Peter Moland, Lilo Pempeit (colleagues at office), Hanna Schygulla (school friend); P - Antiteater, for Maran-Film; Co - ca. 135,000 marks; d - 88 minutes.

1970 ***Rio das Mortes***
S - RWF (from an idea by Volker Schlöndorff); D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann; E - Thea Eymèsz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Harry Baer, Kurt Raab; A - Hanna Schygulla (Hanna), Michael König (Michel), Günther Kaufmann (Günther), Katrin Schaake (Katrin); P - Janus Film und Fernsehen/Antiteater-X-Film; Co - ca. 125,000 marks; d - 84 minutes.

1970 ***The Coffee House*** (*Das Kaffeehaus*)
S - RWF (after Goldoni); C - Dietbert Schmidt, Manfred Förster; M - Peer Raben; AD - Wilfried Minks; A - Margit Carstensen (Vittoria), Ingrid Caven (Placida), Hanna Schygulla (Lisaura), Kurt Raab (Don Marzio), Harry Baer (Eugenio); P - WRF; d - 105 minutes.

1970 ***Whity***
S and D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Franz Walsch, Thea Eymèsz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Harry Baer; A - Günther Kaufmann (Whity), Hanna Schygulla (Hanna), Ulli Lommel (Frank), Harry Baer (Davy) Katrin Schaake (Katherine); P - Atlantic Film/Antiteater-X-Film; Co - ca. 680,000 marks; d - 95 minutes.

1970 ***The Nicklashausen Journey*** (*Die Niklashauser Fart*)
S and D - RWF, Michael Fengler; C - Dietrich Lohmann; E - Thea Eymèsz, Franz Walsch; M - Peer Raben, Amon Düül II; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Harry Baer; A - Michael König (Hans Böhm), Michael Gordon (Antonio), RWF (Black Monk), Hanna Schygulla (Johanna), Walter Sedlmayr (Priest), Margit Carstensen (Margarethe); P - Janus Film und Fernsehen (for WDR); Co - 550,000 marks; d - 86 minutes.

1970 ***The American Soldier*** (*Der Amerikanische Soldat*)
S and D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann; E - Thea Eymèsz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab, RWF; PA - Kurt Raab; A - Karl Scheydt (Ricky), Elga Sorbas (Rosa), Jan George (Jan), Margarethe von Trotta (Maid), Hark Bohm (Doc), Ingrid Caven (Singer); P - Antiteater; Co - ca. 280,000 marks; d - 80 minutes.

1970 ***Beware of a Holy Whore*** (*Warnung vor einer heiligen Nutte*)
S and D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Franz Walsch, Thea Eymèsz; M - Peer Raben, Donizetti, Elvis Presley, Ray Charles, Leonard Cohen, Spooky Tooth; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Harry Baer; A - Lou Castel (Jeff), Eddie Constantine (himself), Hanna Schygulla (Hanna), Marquard Bohm (Ricky), RWF (Sascha), Ulli Lommel (Korbinian), Katrin Schaake (Script-girl); P - Antiteater-X-Film/Nova International, Rome; Co - ca. 1,000,000 marks; d - 103 minutes.

1970 ***Pioneers in Ingolstadt*** (*Pioniere in Ingolstadt*)
S - RWF (after Marieluise Fleisser's play); D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann; E - Thea Eymèsz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Günther Krää; A - Hanna Schygulla (Berta), Harry Baer (Karl), Irm Hermann (Alma), Rudolf Waldemar Brem (Fabian), Walter Sedlmayr (Fritz); P - Janus Film und Fernsehen/Antiteater; Co - ca. 550,000 marks; d - 84 minutes.

1971 ***Merchant of the Four Seasons*** (*Händler der vier Jahreszeiten*)
S and D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann; E - Thea Eymèsz; M - 'Buona Notte' by Rocco Granata; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Harry Baer; A - Hans Hirschmüller (Hans Epp), Irm Hermann (Irmgard), Hanna Schygulla (Elder Sister), Gusti Kreissl (Mother), Kurt Raab (Brother-in-Law); P - Tango-Film; Co - 178,000 marks; d - 89 minutes.

1972 ***The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*** (*Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant*)
S and D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Thea Eymèsz; M - 'Smoke gets in your eyes' by Jerome Kern, 'The Great Pretender' by Buck Ram, 'In my room' by Joacquin Pirieto, Lee Pockriss and Paul Vince, Verdi; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Harry Baer, Kurt Raab; A - Margit Carstensen (Petra), Hanna Schygulla (Karin), Irm Hermann (Marlene), Eva Mattes (Gabriele), Katrin Schaake (Sidonie), Gisela Fackeldey (Mother); P - Tango Film; Co - ca. 325,000 marks; d - 124 minutes.

1972 ***Wild Game*** (Wildwechsel)
S - RWF (after Franz Xaver Kroetz's play); D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann; M - Beethoven and Paul Anka; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Irm Hermann; A - Jörg von Liebenfels (Erwin), Ruth Drexel (Hilda), Eva Mattes (Hanni), Harry Baer (Franz), Rudolf Waldemar Brem (Dieter), Hanna Schygulla (Doctor); P - Intertel (for Sender Freies Berlin); Pd - Gerhard Freund; Co - ca. 550,000 marks; d - 102 minutes.

1972 ***Eight Hours Are Not a Day*** (*Acht Stunden sind kein Tag*) 'A Family Series' for television. 8 episodes were planned but only 5 were made.
S and D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann; E - Marie Anne Gerhardt; M - Jean Gepoint; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Renate Leiffer, Eberhard Schubert; A - Gottfried John (Jochen), Hanna Schygulla (Marion), Luise Ulrich (Grannie), Werner Finck (Gregor), Kurt Raab (Harald), Andrea Schober (Sylvia), Irm Hermann (Irmgard Erlkönig); P - WDR; Co - ca. 1,375,000 marks; d - 101 minutes, 100 minutes, 92 minutes, 89 minutes, 89 minutes.

1972 ***Bremen Coffee*** (*Bremer Freiheit*)
S - RWF and Dietrich Lohmann from RWF's play; D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann, Hans Schugg, Peter Weyrich; E - Friedrich Niquet, Monika Solzbacher; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Fritz Müller-Scherz; A - Margit Carstensen (Geesche), Ulli Lommel (Miltenberger), Wolfgang Schenck (Gottfried), Walter Sedlmayr (Priest), Wolfgang Kieling (Timm); P - Telefilm Saar; Co - 240,000 marks; d - 87 minutes.

1973 ***World on a Wire*** (*Welt am Draht*)
S - Fritz Müller-Scherz, RWF (after Daniel F. Galouye's novel); C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Marie Anne Gerhardt; M - Gottfried Hüngsberg; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Renate Leiffer, Fritz Müller-Scherz; A - Klaus Löwitsch (Fred), Mascha Raaben (Eva), Adrian Hoven (Vollmer), Ivan Desny (Lause), Barbara Valentin (Gloria), Günter Lamprecht (Wolfgang); P - WDR; Co - ca. 950,000 marks; d - Part 1, 99 minutes, shortened to 91 for the repeat, Part 2, 106 minutes.

1973 ***Nora Helmer***
S - Translation by Bernhard Schulze from Ibsen's *The Doll's House*; D - RWF; C - Willi Raber, Wilfried Mier, Peter Weyrich, Gisela Loew, Hans Schugg; E - Anne-Marie Bornheimer, Friedrich Niquet; AD - Friedhelm Boehm; Pa - Fritz Müller-Scherz, Rainer Langhans; A - Margit Carstensen (Nora), Joachim Hansen (Torvald), Barbara Valentin (Mrs Linde), Ulli Lommel (Krogstedt), Klaus Löwitsch (Dr Rank); P - Telefilm Saar; Co - ca. 550,000 marks; d - 101 minutes.

1973 ***Fear Eats the Soul*** (*Angst Essen Seele Auf*)
S and D - RWF; C - Jürgen Jürges; E - Thea Eymèsz; AD - RWF; PA - Rainer Langhans; A - Brigitte Mira (Emmi), El Hedi Ben Salem (Ali), Barbara Valentin (Barbara), Irm Hermann (Krista), RWF (Eugen); P - Tango Film; Co - ca. 260,000 marks; d 193 minutes.

1973 ***Martha***
S and D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Liesgret Schmitt-Klink; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Fritz Müller-Scherz, Renate Leiffer; A - Margit Carstensen (Martha), Karlheinz Böhm (Helmut), Gisela Fackeldey (Mother), Adrian Hoven (Father), Peter Chatel (Kaiser); P - WDR; Co - ca. 500,000 marks; d - 112 minutes.

1972-4 ***Effi Briest*** (*Fontane Effi Briest*)
S - RWF (from Fontane's novel); D - RWF; C - Dietrich Lohmann, Jürgen Jürges; E — Thea Eymèsz; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Rainer Langhans, Fritz Müller-Scherz; A - Hanna Schygulla (Effi), Wolfgang Schenck (Innstetten), Karlheinz Böhm (Wüllersdorf), Ulli Lommel (Crampas), Ursula Strätz (Roswitha), Irm Hermann (Johanna); P - Tango Film; Co - ca. 750,000 marks; d - 141 minutes.

1974 ***Fox*** (*Faustrecht der Freiheit*)
S and D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Thea Eymèsz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Irm Hermann; A - RWF (Franz), Peter Chatel (Eugen), Karlheinz Böhm (Max), Karl Scheydt (Klaus), Hans Zander (Springer), Adrian Hoven (Father); P - Tango Film; Co - ca. 450,000 marks; d - 123 minutes.

1974 ***Like a Bird on the Wire*** (*Wie ein Vogel auf dem Draht*)
S - RWF, Christian Hohoff; D - RWF; C - Erhard Spandel; AD - Kurt Raab, A - Brigitte Mira, Evelyn Künnecke; P - WDR; Co - ca. 150,000 marks, d - 44 minutes.

1975 ***Mother Küsters' Journey to Heaven*** (*Mutter Küsters Fahrt zum Himmel*)
S - RWF with Kurt Raab; D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Thea Eymèsz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Renate Leiffer; A - Brigitte Mira (Emma Küsters), Ingrid Caven (Corinne), Karlheinz Böhm (Tillmann), Margit Carstensen (Frau Tillmann), Irm Hermann (Helene), Gottfried John (Niemeyer); P - Tango Film; Co - ca. 750,000 marks; d - 120 minutes.

1975 ***Fear of Fear*** (*Angst vor der Angst*)
S - RWF from an idea by Asta Scheib; D - RWF; C - Jürgen Jürges, Ulrich Prinz; E - Liesgret Schmitt-Klink, Beate Fischer-Weiskirch; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab; PD - Peter Märthesheimer; A - Margit Carstensen (Margot), Ulrich Faulhaber (Kurt), Brigitte Mira (Mother), Irm Hermann (Lore), Armin Meier (Karli), Adrian Hoven (Dr Merck), Kurt Raab (Herr Bauer); P - WDR; Co - 375,000 marks; d - 88 minutes.

1975-6 ***I Only Want You to Love Me*** (*Ich will doch nur, dass ihr mich liebt*)
S - RWF (from an interview in the book *Lebenslänglich* by Klaus Antes and Christiane Erhardt); D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Liesgret Schmitt-Klink; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab; PA - Renate Leiffer, Christian Hohoff; A - Vitus Zeplichal (Peter), Elke Aberle (Erika), Alexander Allerson (Father), Ernie Mangold (Mother), Johanna Hofer (Grandmother); P - Bavaria Atelier (for WDR); Pd - Peter Märthesheimer; Co - ca. 800,000 marks; d - 104 minutes.

1975-6 ***Satan's Brew*** (*Satansbraten*)
S and D - RWF; C - Jürgen Jürges, Michael Ballhaus; E - Thea Eymèsz, Gabi Eichel; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab, Ulrike Bode; PA - Ila

von Hasberg, Christa Reeh, Renate Leiffer; A - Kurt Raab (Walter Kranz), Margit Carstensen (Andrée), Helen Vita (Luise), Volker Spengler (Ernst), Ingrid Caven (Lilly); P - Albatros Produktion; Pd - Michael Fengler; Co - ca. 600,000 marks; d - 112 minutes.

1976 ***Chinese Roulette*** (*Chinesische Roulette*)

S and D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Ila von Hasberg, Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Curd Melber; PA - Ila von Hasperg; A - Margit Carstensen (Ariane), Anna Karina (Irene), Alexander Allerson (Gerhard), Ulli Lommel (Kolbe), Andrea Schober (Angela), Macha Méril (Traunitz); P - Albatros Produktion, Les Films du Losange; Pd - Michael Fengler; Co - ca. 1,000,000 marks; d - 86 minutes.

1976-7 ***Bolwieser*** (*US title: The Station Master's Wife*)

S - RWF (from Oskar Maria Graf's novel); D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Ila von Hasperg, Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Kurt Raab, Nico Kehran; PA - Christian Hohoff, Ila von Hasperg, Udo Kier; A - Kurt Raab (Bolwieser), Elisabeth Trissenaar (Hanni), Bernhard Helfrich (Merkl), Udo Kier (Schafftaler), Volker Spengler (Mangst), Armin Meier (Scherber); P - Bavaria Atelier; Co - ca. 1,800,000 marks; d - Part 1, 104 minutes, Part 2, 96 minutes, or in the version authorised by RWF for the cinema, 112 minutes.

1977 ***Women in New York*** (*Frauen in New York*)

S - Trans. by Nora Gray from Clare Boothe Luce's play *The Women*; D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Wolfgang Kerhutt; AD - Rolf Glittenberg; A - Christa Berndl (Mary), Margit Carstensen (Sylvia), Eva Mattes (Edith), Barbara Sukowa (Crystal Allen); P - Norddeutscher Rundfunk; Co - ca. 320,000 marks; d - 111 minutes.

1977 ***Despair*** (*Eine Reise ins Licht - Despair*)

S - Tom Stoppard (from Vladimir Nabokov's novel); D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Rolf Zehetbauer; PA - Harry Baer; A - Dirk Bogarde (Hermann Hermann), Andrea Ferréol (Lydia), Volker Spengler (Ardalion), Klaus Löwitsch (Felix), Alexander Allerson (Mayer); P - NF Geria II, Sender Freies Berlin and Bavaria Atelier; Pd - Peter Märthesheimer; Co - ca. 6,000,000 marks; d - 119 minutes.

1977-8 ***Germany in Autumn*** (*Deutschland im Herbst*)

This film consisted of 8 episodes, which had different directors. Details are given here only for the episode directed by Fassbinder. S - improvised; D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Juliane Lorenz; A RWF, Liselotte Eder, Armin Meier; P - Pro-ject Filmproduktion (Filmverlag der Autoren); d - 26 minutes.

1978 ***The Marriage of Maria Braun*** (*Die Ehe der Maria Braun*)

S - Peter Märthesheimer and Pea Fröhlich, from an idea by RWF; D - RWF; C - Michael Ballhaus; E - Franz Walsch, Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Helga Ballhaus; PA - Rolf Bührmann; A - Hanna Schygulla (Maria), Klaus Löwitsch (Hermann), Ivan Desny (Oswald), Gottfried John (Willi), Günter Lamprecht (Wetzel), George Byrd (Bill), Elisabeth Trissenaar (Betti), Hark Bohm (Senkenberg); P - Albatros Produktion, Trio-Film, WDR; Pd - Michael Fengler; Co - 1,975,000 marks; d - 120 minutes.

1978 ***In a Year with 13 Moons*** (*In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden*)

S, D, C, E and AD - RWF; M - Peer Raben, Songs - Frankie Teardrop by Suicide, 'A Song for Europe' by Roxy Music; A - Volker Spengler (Elvira), Ingrid Caven (Red Zora), Gottfried John (Anton Saitz), Elisabeth Trissenaar (Irene), Eva Mattes (Marie-Ann); P - Tango Film, Project Filmproduktion (Filmverlag der Autoren); Co - ca. 700,000 marks; d - 124 minutes.

1978-9 ***The Third Generation*** (*Die dritte Generation*)

S, D and C - RWF; E - Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Raul Gimenez, Volker Spengler; PA - Juliane Lorenz; A - Volker Spengler (August) Harry Baer (Rudolf), Vitus Zeplichal (Bernhard), Udo Kier (Edgar); P - Tango Film, Pro-ject Filmproduktion (Filmverlag der Autoren); Co - ca. 800,000 marks; d - 110 minutes.

1979-80 ***Berlin Alexanderplatz***

13 episodes and an epilogue.

S - RWF (from Alfred Döblin's novel) ; D - RWF; AC - Harry Baer; C - Xaver Schwarzenberger; E - Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Helmut Gassner, Werner Achmann, Jürgen Henze; PA - Renate Leiffer; A - Günter Lamprecht (Franz), Gottfried John (Reinhold), Barbara Sukowa (Mieze), Hanna Schygulla (Eva), Franz Buchreiser (Meck), Claus Holm (Landlord); P - Bavaria Atelier, RAI (for WDR); Pd - Peter Märthesheimer; Co - ca. 13,000,000 marks; d - 81 minutes, 58 minutes, 59 minutes, 59 minutes, 59 minutes, 58 minutes, 58 minutes, 58 minutes, 59 minutes, 59 minutes, 59 minutes, 59 minutes, 111 minutes.

1980 ***Lili Marleen***

S - Manfred Purzer, RWF (from Lale Andersen's autobiography *Der Himmel hat viele Farben*); D - RWF; C - Xaver Schwarzenberger; E - Franz Walsch, Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; Song 'Lili Marleen' by Norbert Schulze; AD - Rolf Zehetbauer; AC - Harry Baer; PA - Renate Leiffer; A - Hanna Schyglla (Wilkie), Giancarlo Giannini (Robert), Mel Ferrer (David Mendelssohn), Karl-Heinz von Hassel (Henkel), Christine Kaufmann (Miriam), Hark Bohm (Taschner); P - Roxy-Film, Rialto-Film, CIP, Rome, Bayrischer Rundfunk; Pd - Luggi Waltleitner; Co - 10,500,000 marks; d - 120 minutes.

1981 ***Lola***

S - Peter Märthesheimer, Pea Fröhlich, RWF; D - RWF; C - Xaver Schwarzenberger; E - Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Raul Gimenez, Udo Kier; AC - Harry Baer; PA - Karin Viesel; A - Barbara Sukowa (Lola), Armin Mueller-Stahl (von Bohm), Mario Adorf (Schuckert), Matthias Fuchs (Esslin), Helga Feddersen (Hettich); P - Rialto-Film, Trio-Film, WDR; Pd - Horst Wendlandt; Co - 3,500,000 marks; d - 113 minutes.

1981 ***Theatre in a Trance*** (*Theater in Trance*)

S - RWF (with texts from Artaud); D - RWF; C - Werner Lüring; E - Juliane Lorenz, Franz Walsch; PA - Raul Gimenez; A - various dance and theatre companies: Het Werkteater, Squat Theatre, Sombrad Blancas, Kipper Kids, Magazzini Criminali, Pina Bausch and the Wuppertal Dance Theatre, Jérome Savary, Yoshi Oida; P - Laura-Film; Pd - Thomas Schühly; Co - 220,000 marks; d - 91 minutes.

1981 ***Veronika Voss*** (*Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss*)

S - Peter Märthesheimer, Pea Fröhlich; D - RWF; C - Xaver Schwarzenberger; E - Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD - Rolf Zehetbauer; PA - Karin Viesel, Harry Baer, Tamara Kafka; A - Rosel Zech (Veronika), Hilmar Thate (Robert), Cornelia Froboess (Henriette), Annemarie Düringer (Dr Katz), Doris Schade (Josefa), Johanna Hofer and Rudolf Platte (old couple); P - Laura-Film, Tango-Film, Rialto-Film, Maran-Film; Pd - Thomas Schühly; Co - ca. 2,600,000; d - 104 minutes.

1982 ***Querelle*** (*Querelle - ein Pakt mit dem Teufel*)

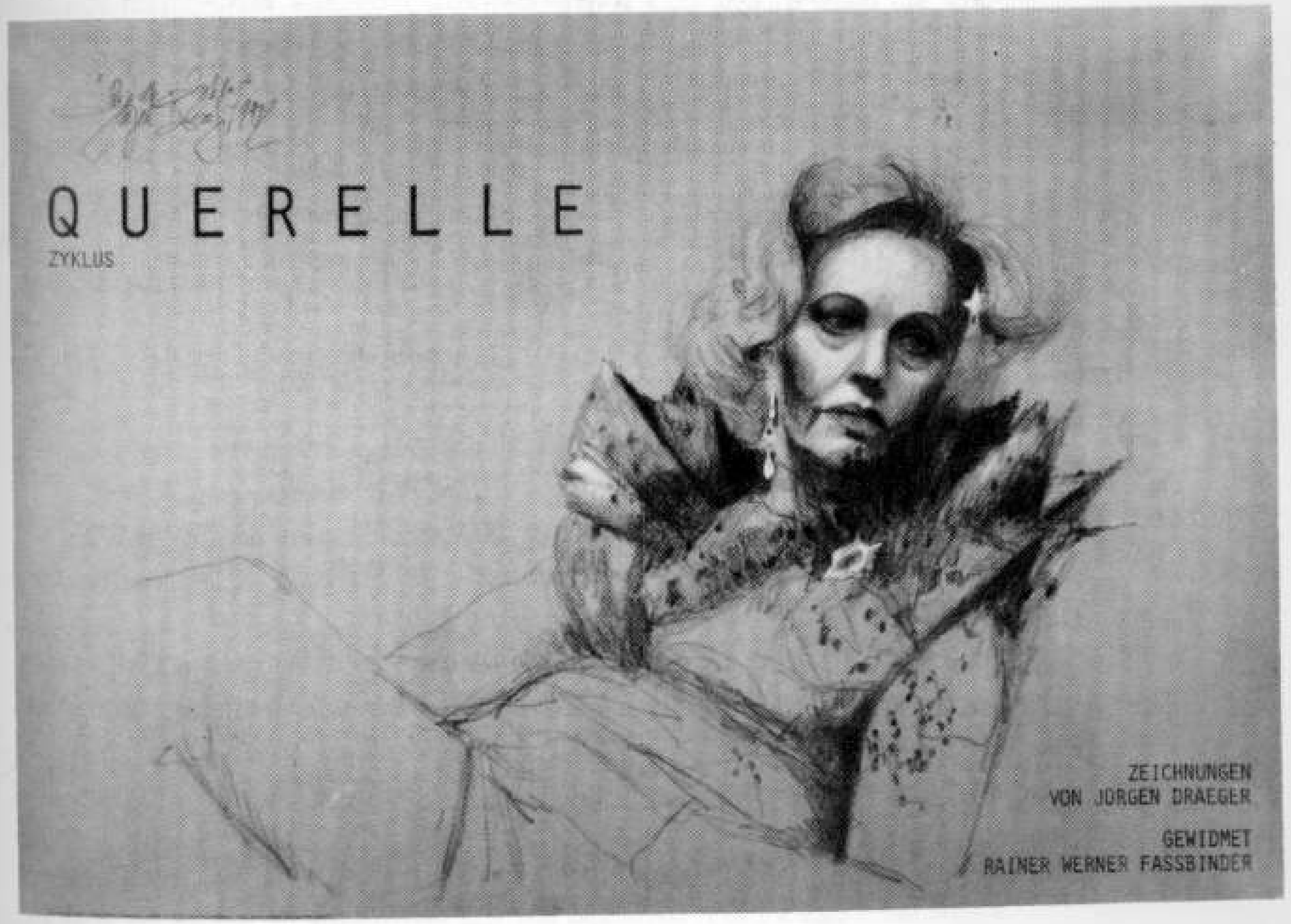
S - RWF, Burkhard Driest (from Genet's novel); D - RWF; C - Xaver Schwarzenberger; E - Franz Walsch, Juliane Lorenz; M - Peer Raben; AD Rolf Zehetbauer; AC - Harry Baer; PA - Karin Viesel, Michael McLernon; A - Brad Davis (Querelle), Franco Nero (Lieut. Seblon), Jeanne Moreau (Lysiane), Laurent Malet (Roger), Hanno Pöschl (Robert/Gil), Günther Kaufmann (Nono), Burkhard Driest (Mario), Dieter Schidor (Vic); P - Planet-Film, Albatros-Produktion, Gaumont, Paris, in association with Sam Waynberg; Pd - Dieter Schidor; Co - 4,400,000 marks; d - 106 minutes.

Fassbinder as an Actor in Film and Television

Performances in his own films have already been listed.

1967 Mallard in *Tony's Friends* (*Tonys Freunde*) dir. by Paul Vasil.
1968 Freder, the pimp in *The Bridegroom, The Comedienne and the Pimp* (*Der Bräutigam, die Komödiantin und der Zuhälter*) dir. by Jean-Marie Straub.
1969 Man in uniform in *Alarm* dir. by Dieter Lemmel.
Heini in *Al Capone in the German Forest* (*Al Capone im Deutschen Wald*) dir. by Franz Peter Wirth.

Baal in *Baal* dir. by Volker Schlöndorff.
Mechanic in *Free till Next Time* (*Frei bis zum nächsten Mal*) dir. by Korbinian Köberle.
1970 Fleckbauer in *Matthias Kreissl* dir. by Reinhard Hauff.
Peasant in *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* (*Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leuten von Kombach*) dir. by Volker Schlöndorff
Window-Shopper in *Supergirl* dir. by Rudolf Thome.
1973 Wittkowski in *The Tenderness of Wolves* (*Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe*) dir. by Ulli Lommel.
1974 Himself in *1 Berlin Harlem* dir. by Lothar Lambert.
1975 Raoul in *Shadow of Angels* (*Schatten der Engel*) dir. by Daniel Schmid.
1976 Hermann in *Adolf und Marlene* dir. by Ulli Lommel.
1977 Himself in *The Little Godard* (*Der kleine Godard*) dir. by H. Costard.
1978 Author in *Bourbon Street Blues* collective production of the Hochschule fur Fernsehen und Film, Munich, under the supervision of Douglas Sirk, Hans Schönherr and Tilman Taube.
1981 Babiuch in *Polish Summer* (*Polnischer Sommer*) dir. by Jürgen Flimm.
Police Lieutenant Jansen in *Kamikaze 1989* dir. by Wolf Gremm.
1982 Himself in *The Heiress* (*Die Erbtochter*) dir. by M-C. Questerberg.



Andy Warhol poster for *Querelle*.

Fassbinder in the Theatre

Plays, Adaptations and Productions.

Oct. 1967	Büchner's *Leonce and Lena* at the Action-Theater, jointly dir. by Peer Raben, RWF, Ursula Strätz and Christine Peterson.
Dec. 1967	Bruckner's *The Criminals* (*Die Verbrecher*) at the antiteater, dir. by RWF.
Feb. 1968	For *Example Ingolstadt* (*Zum Beispiel Ingolstadt*) adap. by RWF. from Marieluise Fleisser's play at the Büchner-Theater, dir. by Peer Raben and RWF.
Apr. 1968	RWF's *Katzelmacher* at the antiteater, dir. by Peer Raben and RWF.
Apr. 1968	(Collective Authorship) *Axel Caesar Haarmann* at the antiteater, dir. by Peer Raben and RWF.
	Peter Weiss's *Herr Mockinpott* at the antiteater (Collective direction) *Orgie Ubuh* adap. by Peer Raben, RWF and others from Alfred Jarry's play for the antiteater dir. Jörg Schmitt and RWF.
Aug. 1968	*Iphigenie auf Tauris* adap. by RWF from Goethe's play for the antiteater dir. by RWF.
Oct. 1968	*Ajax* adap. by RWF from Sophocles's play for the antiteater, dir. by RWF.
Dec. 1968	RWF's *The American Soldier* (*Der Amerikanische Soldat*) at the antiteater dir. by RWF.
Dec. 1968	The *Beggar's Opera* (*Die Betteloper*) adap. by RWF from Gay's ballad opera for the antiteater, dir. by Peer Raben and RWF.
Feb. 1969	RWF's *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now* at the antiteater dir. by RWF.
Mar. 1969	RWF's *Anarchy in Bavaria* (*Anarchie in Bayern*) at the antiteater, dir. by RWF.
Jun. 1969	*The Coffee House* (*Das Kaffeehaus*) adap. by RWF from Goldoni's play for the antiteater, produced in its Workshop, dir. by Peer Raben and RWF.
Sep. 1969	*Werewolf* (*Werwolf*) by Harry Baer and RWF in Bremen, dir. by Peer Raben and RWF.
Dec. 1969	*The Burning Village* (*Das brennende Dorf*) adap. by RWF from Lope de Vega's play, directed for the antiteater in Berlin by RWF.
Nov. 1970	*Pioneers in Ingolstadt* (*Pioniere in Ingolstadt*) adap. by RWF from Marieluise Fleisser's play, dir. by Peer Raben in Bremen.
Jan. 1971	RWF's *Blood on the Cat's Neck* (*Blut am Hals der Katze*) directed for the antiteater in Nuremberg by Peer Raben and RWF.
Jun. 1971	RWF's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (*Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant*) at the Frankfurt Experimenta dir. by Peer Raben.
Dec. 1971	RWF's *Bremen Coffee* (*Bremer Freiheit*) in Bremen, dir. by RWF.
Dec. 1972	Molnár's *Liliom* in Bochum, dir. by RWF.
Jan. 1973	Heinrich Mann's *Bibi* in Bochum, dir. by RWF.
Dec. 1973	Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* at the Volksbühne, Berlin, dir. by RWF.
May 1974	Handke's *The Unintelligent Ones are Dying Out* (*Die Unvernünftigen sterben aus*) at the Frankfurt Schauspielhaus, dir. by RWF.
Sep. 1974	*Germinal* adap. by Yaak Karsunke from Zola's novel at the Theater am Turm, Frankfurt, dir. by RWF.
Dec. 1974	Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (*Onkel Wanja*) at the Theater am Turm, dir. by RWF.
Sep. 1976	Clare Boothe Luce's *The Women* trans. by Nora Gray as *Frauen in New York* at the Hamburg Schauspielhaus, dir. by RWF.

Radio Plays

10 Apr. 1970	*Pre-Paradise Sorry Now*, Suddeutscher Rundfunk.
16 Oct. 1970	*All in White* (*Ganz in Weiss*) Bayrischer Rundfunk.
15 May 1971	*Iphigenie auf Tauris* adap. from Goethe's play Westdeutscher Rundfunk.
5 May 1972	*No-one is Evil and No-one is Good* (*Keiner ist böse und Keiner ist gut*) Bayrischer Rundfunk

Select Bibliography

Fassbinder's Work in English

Bremen Coffee (*Bremer Freiheit*) trans. by Anthony Vivis in *Shakespeare the Sadist and Other Plays*, London, 1977 (Eyre Methuen).
Pre-Paradise Sorry Now trans by Peter Zander in *Gambit* Vol 6 No 21.
Cock-Artist (*Katzelmacher*) trans. by Steve Gooch in *Gambit* Vol 10 Nos 39–40.

On Fassbinder in English

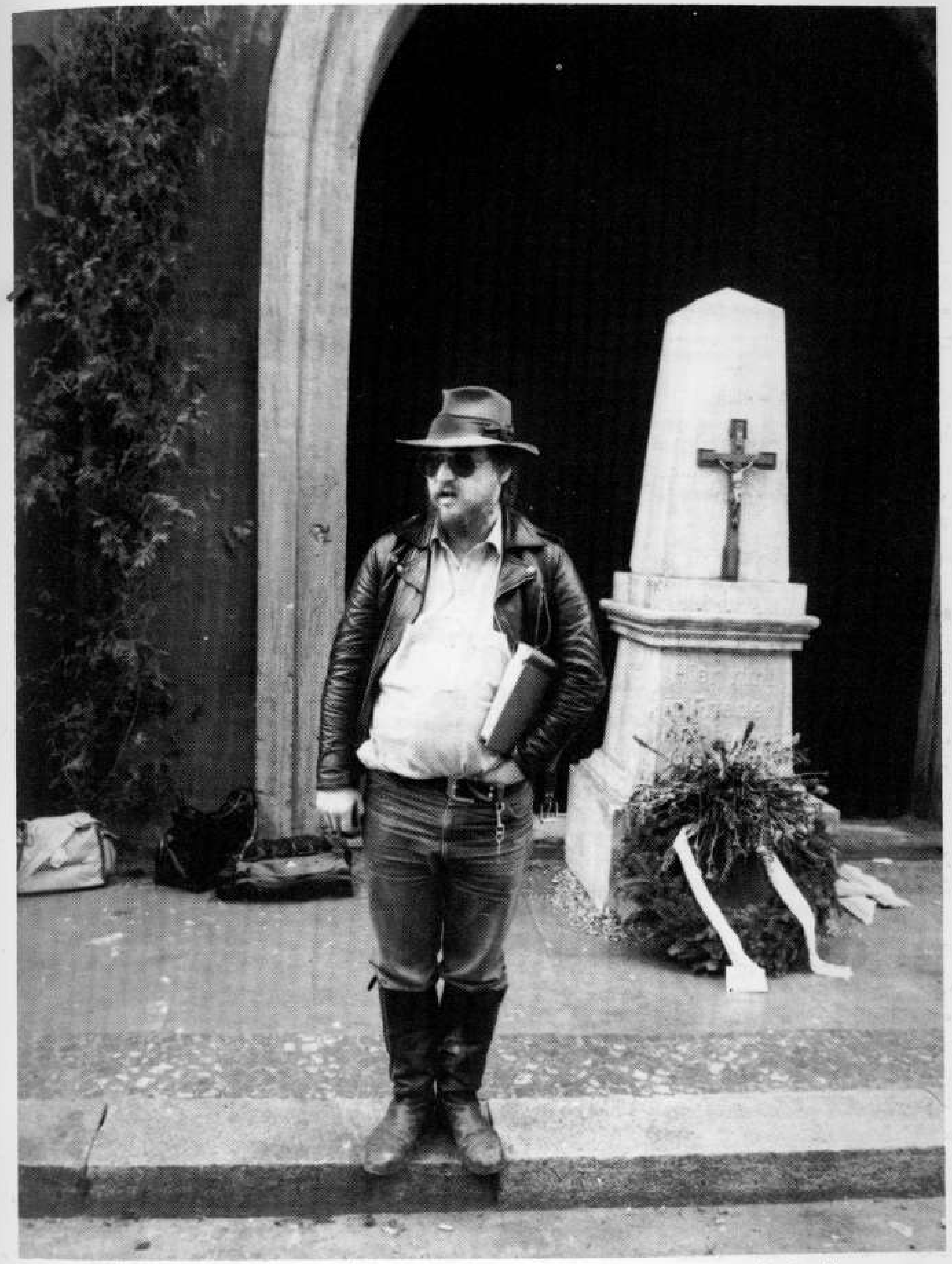
Tony Rayns (ed): *Fassbinder*, British Film Institute, 1976; 1976; 2nd ed 1979.
(Various Authors): *Fassbinder*, trans from the German by Ruth McCormick, New York, 1981.
Rainer Werner Fassbinder October (a special issue, summer 1982, No 21) Cambridge, Massachusetts.
John Sandford: *The New German Cinema*, London, 1980.

Fassbinder's Work in German
Liebe is kälter als der Tod. Film (Velber) Aug. 1969.

Antiteater 1 (*Katzelmacher, Preparadise sorry now, Die Betteloper*) Frankfurt, 1970.
Antiteater 2 (*Das Kaffeehaus, Bremer Freiheit, Blut am Hals der Katze*) Frankfurt 1972.
Stücke 3 (*Das brennende Dorf, Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant, Der Müll, die Stadt und der Tod*) Frankfurt 1976, reprinted in *Theaterbuch I* Munich, 1978.
Der Film Berlin Alexanderplatz. Ein Arbeitsjournal von RWF und Harry Baer (contains the complete script) Frankfurt, 1980.
Hanna Schygulla, Bilder aus Filmen von RWF (contains an essay by RWF) Munich, 1981.
Querelle Filmbuch (contains the complete script) Munich, 1982.

On Fassbinder in German

Baer, Harry: *Schlafen kann ich, wenn ich tot bin. Das atemlose Leben des Rainer Werner Fassbinder*, Cologne, 1982.
Eckhardt, Bernd: *Rainer Werner Fassbinder*, Munich, 1982.
Peter Iden, Peter W. Jansen, Yaak Karsunke, Hans Helmut Prinzler, Wilhelm Roth, Wolfram Schütte and Wilfried Wiegand: *Rainer Werner Fassbinder*, Reihe Film 2, 4th edition, Munich, 1973.
Limmer, Wolfgang: *Rainer Werner Fassbinder Filmemacher*, Hamburg, 1981.
Pflaum, Hans Günther and Fassbinder, Rainer Werner: *Das Bisschen Realität, das ich brauche*, Munich, 1976.
Raab, Kurt and Peters, Karsten: *Die Sehnsucht des Rainer Werner Fassbinder*, Munich, 1982.
Schidor, Dieter: *Rainer Werner Fassbinder dreht Querelle*, Munich, 1982.
Zwerenz, Gerhard: *Der langsame Tod des Rainer Werner Fassbinder*, Munich, 1982.



Fassbinder in Berlinerstrasse as recreated in the grounds of Bavaria Atelier Gesellschaft for *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1979–80).

Index

The American Soldier, 24, 57–9, 125, 153
Artaud, Antonin, 54, 78, 92

Baer, Harry, 10, 22, 45–6, 57, 59–61, 63, 64, 75, 91, 97, 125, 135
Berlin Alexanderplatz, 22, 24, 46, 53, 88, 120–7, 129, 131, 141, 157
Beware of a Holy Whore, 40, 48–9, 53, 89, 91, 153
The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant, 17–20, 22, 33, 45, 49, 56–7, 61–2, 64, 107, 108, 118, 141, 145–6, 153
Blood on the Cat's Neck, 106–7, 108, 111
Böll, Heinrich, 99, 101, 102, 104
Bolwieser, 45, 93, 106, 156
Bremen Coffee, 67, 105, 154

Carstensen, Margit, 22, 41, 46, 49, 90, 92, 102, 108, 110, 144–5
Caven, Ingrid, 24, 46, 64, 74, 81, 91, 96–7, 101, 144
Chatel, Peter, 21, 46, 51, 52, 68
Chinese Roulette, 92, 142, 156
The City Tramp, 22, 29, 30, 41, 46, 151
The Coffee House, 46, 152

Despair, 76, 131, 156
Döblin, Alexander, 120–7, 133
A Doll's House, 22–4, 144–5

Eder, Wolf, 4, 15, 26
Effi Briest, 88, 91–2, 129, 131, 155
Eight Hours are Not a Day, 25, 154

Fassbinder, Hellmuth, 2, 3–4, 13
Fassbinder, Liselotte (Lilo Pempeit), 1–4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 20–1, 25–6, 29–30, 76
Fear Eats the Soul, 13, 14, 25, 66–7, 102, 104, 105, 107, 110, 141, 154
Fear of Fear, 108–10, 155
Fengler, Michael, 29, 30, 41, 46, 76
Fox, 68–73, 74–5, 78, 94, 125, 126, 155

The Garbage, The City and Death, 52, 64, 81
Genet, Jean, 129, 131–3
Germany in Autumn, 74, 75, 156
Godard, Jean-Luc, 30, 41, 74, 92, 143
Gods of the Plague, 26, 45, 62–3, 125, 152
Grass, Günter, 99, 102–4

Handke, Peter, 40, 51, 106–7
Hermann, Irm, 16, 20–4, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 46, 49, 53, 64, 66, 85, 91, 98, 102

I Only Want You to Love Me, 5–7, 11, 62, 69, 94, 110, 145, 155
I'm the Happiness of This Earth, 135
In a Year with 13 Moons, 73, 76–83, 89, 106, 113, 138, 157

John, Gottfried, 46, 52, 82, 88, 101

Kamikaze 1989, 135–6
Katzelmacher, 13, 35, 44–5, 48, 104, 105, 107, 108, 125, 136, 151–2
Kaufmann, Günther, 7, 32, 46–8, 57–9, 61–4, 66, 73, 74, 91, 97, 133, 135

Lamprecht, Günter, 46, 82, 88
Lili Marleen, 46, 73–4, 105, 116, 118, 138–9, 157
The Little Chaos, 26, 30, 41, 46, 151
Lola, 42, 53, 105, 114–16, 144, 158
Lommel, Ulli, 21, 41, 42, 46, 49, 54–5, 91
Lorenz, Juliane, 135
Love is Colder than Death, 33, 34, 40, 41–2, 45, 46, 125, 151

The Marriage of Maria Braun, 46, 76, 88, 114, 116–19, 138, 141, 156–7
Martha, 94–6, 107, 108, 111, 146, 154
Mattes, Eva, 46, 78, 85
Meier, Armin, 46, 67–81, 83, 92–3, 102
The Merchant of Four Seasons; 8–10, 15, 25, 66, 106, 107, 108, 141, 153
Mira, Brigitta, 46, 99, 102
Moreau, Jeanne, 17, 143, 144
Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven, 99–102, 106, 155

The Nicklashausen Journey, 59, 152
Nora Helmer, 22–4, 154

Pioneers in Ingolstadt, 46, 153
Pre-Paradise Sorry Now, 106, 108

Querelle, 16–17, 32, 46, 97, 127–33, 138, 141, 158

Raab, Kurt, 10, 12, 14–16, 25–6, 32–3, 35–6, 38, 45–7, 49, 51–2, 57, 64, 67, 76, 83, 85, 88, 91–3, 97–8, 106, 146
Raben, Peer, 22, 30–5, 38–41, 45–6, 49, 52, 59
Rio das Mortes, 8, 46, 152
Roser, Christoph, 21, 22, 28–9, 30, 91

Salem, 25, 64–7, 68, 73, 74, 76, 98
Satan's Brew, 45, 54, 89–90, 92, 94, 155–6
Schidor, Dieter, 10, 17, 42, 97, 98, 136, 138
Schühly, Thomas, 53–4, 135
Schygulla, Hanna, 8, 22, 24, 27, 30, 31, 33–4, 41–2, 46, 49, 85–8, 97, 110, 119, 144
Shadow of Angels, 64
Strätz, Ursula, 30–5, 68, 90–1
Sukowa, Barbara, 42, 46, 53, 85, 116, 144

Veronika Voss, 42, 46, 53–4, 105, 108, 110–14, 158

Whity, 46–8, 57, 91, 152
Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?, 45, 105–6, 152
Wild Game, 45, 106, 153
Women in New York, 24, 52, 107, 156

Zech, Rosel, 42, 85, 114